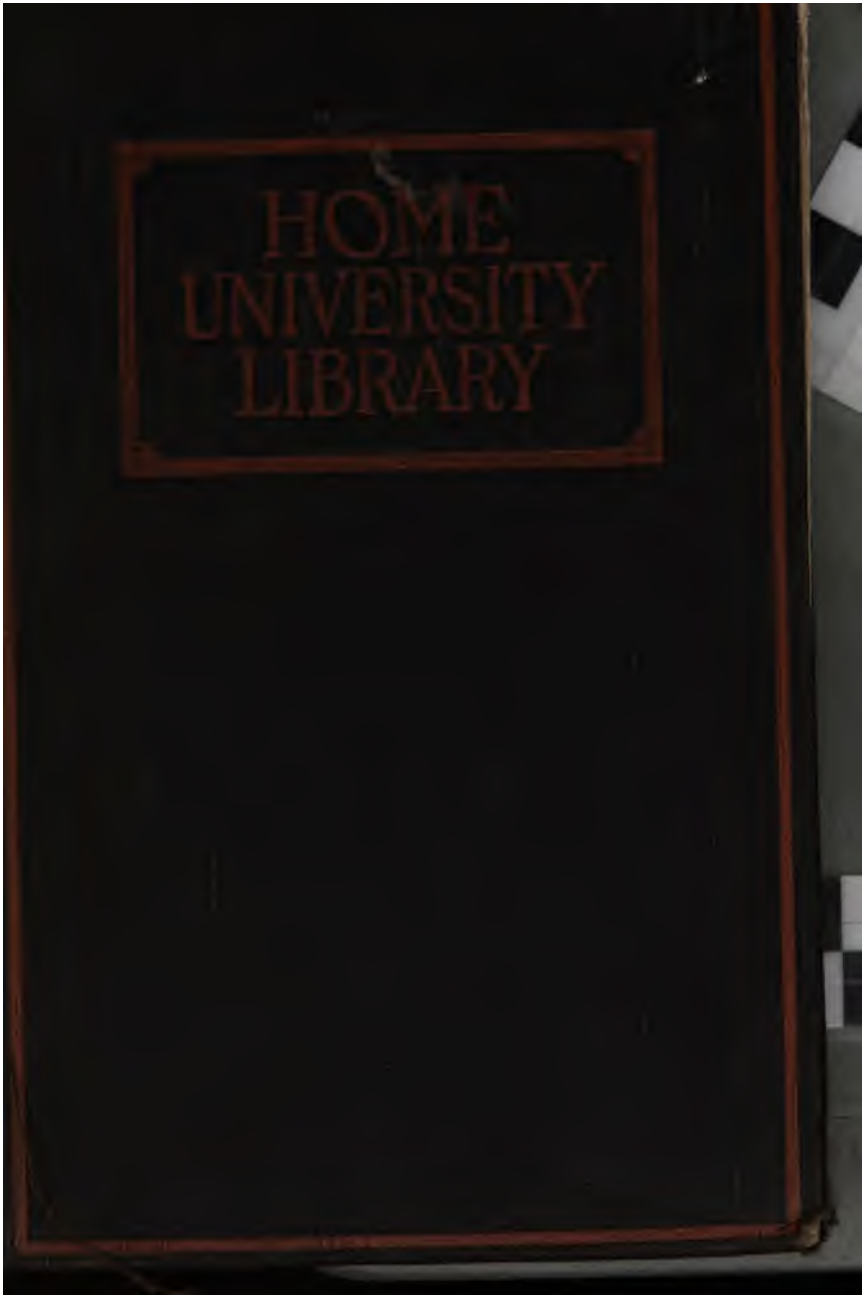
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THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AMONG the many living forms of human speech, and those countless others which have arisen and perished in the past, the English language, which has now spread over so large a portion of the world, is as humble and obscure in its origin as any other. It is, of course, in no sense native to England, but was brought thither by the German tribes who conquered the island in the Vth and VIth Centuries; and its nearest relations are to be found among the humble dialects of a few barren islands on the German coast. When our Anglo-Saxon ancestors came first to ravage Britain, and finally to settle there, they found the island inhabited by a people weaker, indeed, but infinitely more civilized than themselves. For several centuries the

Celts in England had enjoyed the benefits of Roman government, and shared in the civilization of the Roman Empire; they lived in walled cities, worshipped in Christian churches, and spoke to a certain extent, at least, the Latin language; and it is possible, if this Teutonic invasion had never happened, that the inhabitants of England would be now speaking a language descended from Latin, like French or Spanish or Italian. It is true that English has become almost a half-sister to these "Romance languages," as they are called, and a large part of its vocabulary is derived from Latin sources; but this is not in any way due to the Roman conquest of Britain, but to later causes. In whatever parts of Britain the Teutonic tribes settled, the Roman civilization and the Roman language perished; and we find at first a purely Germanic race, a group of related tribes, speaking dialects of what was substantially the same language—the language which is the parent of our present English speech. This Anglo-Saxon or (as it is now preferably called) "Old English" language belonged to the great Teutonic family of

speech, which in its turn was separated into three main families—East Germanic, now extinct; Scandinavian, or old Norse, from which Icelandic, Danish, and Swedish are descended; and West Germanic, from which are derived the two great branches of High and Low German. High German has become the modern literary German; while Low German has split up into a number of different languages—Frisian, Dutch, and Flemish. It is to the last of these groups that English belongs, and its nearest relatives are the Frisian dialect, Dutch, and Flemish.

But the Teutonic tongues themselves form one branch of another great family, the Aryan or Indo-European, which is spread from India in the East to Ireland in the West, and includes Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, Celtic, and several other languages. The grammatical structure of English and German, and a large element of their vocabularies, proves their relationship to these other tongues, though in the course of their wanderings from their primitive home, forms were changed or dropped, the pronunciation of some of the vowels and consonants shifted,

many old words perished, and many new ones were acquired. The study of the relationships between these various languages forms the subject of the science of Comparative Philology, a science almost entirely based in its turn on what is called "Phonology," the study of changes in sound, and the elaborate laws by which they are governed. It is only, indeed, since the discovery of these laws that the science of language or "linguistics" has become possible, and it is on the careful and accurate study of sound-changes that is founded the modern historical conception of English, its relationship to other languages, and its development from the early speech of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

This early speech was, as we have seen, a Teutonic or German language. Although our modern English has been derived from it by a regular process of change, it was in its character more like modern Dutch or modern German. Its vocabulary was what is now called a "pure" one, containing few foreign words, and its grammar was even more complicated than that of modern German. It retained the elaborate system of genders; its

nouns were masculine, feminine, or neuter; they had five cases and various declensions, and the adjectives, as in German, agreed with the nouns, and were declined with them; and in the conjugation of the verbs there were twice as many forms as in modern English. It was, therefore, like Latin and Greek and German, an inflected language; while in modern English inflections have almost disappeared, and other means of expressing grammatical relations have been devised.

As this loss of inflections is one of the main characteristics of modern English, and illustrates a tendency of language which has been carried further in English than in any other form of European speech, it will be well, perhaps, to say a few more words about it. To the older philologists, when the change of language, from the earliest tongues down to the present day, was at last unfolded before their eyes, the long and uninterrupted history of grammatical losses which they found, the perishing of one nice distinction after another, seemed to them an uninterrupted process of ruin and degeneration. But this view of the history of language—a continuous advance,

namely, in richness and accuracy of expression, accompanied and produced by a continual process of decay—is too paradoxical to be maintained, and it is coming to be realized more and more that the disappearance of grammatical forms is not a loss, but a gain; and that they have been superseded by a means of expression which renders them more or less superfluous, and is itself vastly more expressive and convenient. This means of expression is called "analysis," and consists in stating the relations once expressed by verbal terminations by separate words of an abstract character; by prepositions for the cases of nouns, and by auxiliaries for the tenses of the verbs. If we look in a Latin grammar we shall find, for instance, that to translate one Latin word, *fuissem*, four words, "I should have been," are used in English; that is to say, the different notions combined by inflection in one Latin word are taken out from the conglomerate whole by analysis, and are expressed each of them by a separate word.

The development of analysis in language, the habit of using a separate word for the

expression of each separate element in a complex notion, is one that we can trace throughout the whole history of language. In primitive forms of speech whole complexes of thought and feeling are expressed in single terms. "I said it to him" is one word, "I said it to her" another; "my head" is a single term, "his head" a different one. My head is, of course, to me an enormously different thing from his head, and it is an immense advance in the clearness of thought when I analyse the thought of "my head" into its different parts, one of which is peculiar to me, and named "mine," the other that of "head," which I share with other human beings. Simplicity of language is, in fact, like other kinds of simplicity, a product of high civilization, not a primitive condition; and the advance of analysis, the creation of words expressing abstract relations, is one of the most remarkable triumphs of the human intellect. This development of analysis had already, of course, reached a high point in languages like Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon; but it has been carried even further in modern forms of speech, and reaches in

Europe, at least, its furthest limit in modern English. We see it, in the first place, in the greatly increased use of prepositions, *of*, and *to*, and *for*, and *by*, and still more in the use of the auxiliary verbs *have*, and *do*, and *shall*, and *will*, and *be*, by means of which we are now able to express almost every shade of thought which was formerly rendered by changes in the form of the verb.

Along with this creation of new grammatical machinery, modern English is remarkable for the way in which other superfluous forms and unnecessary terminations have been discarded. In the first place, we must note the loss in English of grammatical gender. The absence of this in English is more extraordinary than we always realize. For this irrational distinction, which corresponds to no distinction in thought, and capriciously attributes sex to sexless objects, and often the wrong gender to living beings, is yet found, as a survival of barbarism and a useless burden to the memory, in all the other well-known languages of Europe. With the loss of gender we have also discarded the agreement of adjectives, of possessive pro-

nouns and the article, with their nouns. An Englishman can say, for instance, "my wife and children" while the Frenchman must repeat the possessive pronoun, as in *ma femme et mes enfants*. If we regard it as the triumph of culture to fit means perfectly to ends, and to do the most with the greatest economy of means, we must consider this discarding of the superfluous as a great gain in modern English.

Another great characteristic of modern English, as of other modern languages, is the use of word-order as a means of grammatical expression. If in an English sentence, such as "The wolf ate the lamb," we transpose the positions of the nouns, we entirely change the meaning of the sentence; the subject and object are not denoted by any terminations to the words, as they would be in Greek or Latin or in modern German, but by their position before or after the verb. This is one of the last developments of speech, a means of expression unknown to the rich and beautiful languages of antiquity. This tendency to a fixed word-order was more or less established in Early English, as it is in modern

German, in spite of the richness of inflections in these languages; and it is a debatable point whether the decay of inflections made it necessary, or its establishment made the inflections superfluous, and so brought about their decay. Probably each acted on the other; as the inflections faded, a fixed word-order became more important, and the establishment of this order caused the inflections to be more and more forgotten.

How is it, then, that these amazing changes, this loss of genders, this extraordinary simplification, have happened in our English speech? For five hundred years after the invasion of England, the language of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors remained, as far as we can judge, practically unchanged. Then a transformation began, and in three or four centuries what is practically a new language somewhat suddenly appears. In the first place, as an answer to this question, is the fact that simplification is the law of development in all languages, and has influenced more or less all European forms of speech. At the time that English changed, the other languages of Europe were changing too. That this

process was carried further, and proceeded faster in England than elsewhere is not, however, due to any special enlightenment or advance of civilization in the English nation. For, as a matter of fact, education, culture, and enlightenment, although they help progress in other ways, are intensely conservative in matters of speech; and while for their own purposes the educated classes have to connive at changes in vocabulary, any grammatical advance is opposed by them with all the powers they possess. We know how intensely repugnant to them are any proposals for the reform of our absurd and illogical system of spelling, and we can imagine the outcry that would arise, should any one dare to suggest the slightest and most advantageous simplification in English grammar. In our plurals *these* and *those*, for instance, we retain, as Dr. Sweet has pointed out, two quite useless and illogical survivals of the old concord of attribute-words with their nouns. For if we do not change our adjectives or possessive pronouns for the plural, and say *his* hat and *his* hats, why should we change *this* and *that* into *these* and *those* in the same

positions? And yet the whole force of education and culture would furiously oppose the dropping of these superfluous words, if, indeed, they could be brought to consider any such proposal. As a matter of fact, the progress in English is due not to the increase of education, but to its practical disappearance among those who used the national speech. It is the result, not of national prosperity, but of two national disasters—the Danish invasion and the Norman Conquest.

The first district of England to attain any high degree of civilization, according to the standards of that time, was the north, where Christianity and culture were introduced from Ireland, where literature and scholarship flourished, and where the local or Northumbrian dialect seemed likely to become the standard speech of England. It was, indeed, from the Angles settled here and their Anglian dialect, that our language acquired the name of "English," which it has ever since retained. This Northumbrian civilization, however, was almost utterly destroyed in the VIIIth and IXth Centuries by a new invasion of pagan tribes from across the German Ocean. The

Danes, who now came like the Angles and Saxons, first to harry England and then to settle there, were near relatives of the inhabitants they conquered, and came from a district not far from the original home of the earlier invaders. Their language was so like Anglo-Saxon that it could be understood without great difficulty; so when the two races were settled side by side, and when before long they became amalgamated, it was natural that mixed dialects should arise, mainly English in character, but with many Danish words, and with many differing grammatical forms confused and blurred. As there was no literature nor any literary class to preserve the old language, the rise of these mixed dialects would be unchecked, and we can safely attribute to this settlement of the Danes a great influence on the change in the English language. It is in the districts where the Danes were settled that the English language became first simplified, so that in the process of development their speech was at least two centuries ahead of that of the south of England. But this effect was only local, and did not at first affect the language

as a whole. When the Northumbrian culture was destroyed, the kingdom of Wessex became the centre of English civilization; and under the scholarly influence of King Alfred, and the revival of learning he promoted, West-Saxon became the literary and classical form of English, and almost all the specimens of Early English that have been preserved are written in this dialect. Classical Anglo-Saxon, therefore, with its genders and its rich inflectional forms, was not affected by the Danish invasion; and had it suffered from no further disaster, English would probably have developed much as the other Low German forms have developed, and we should be now speaking a language not unlike modern Dutch.

But for the third time a foreign race invaded England, and the language of Wessex, like that of Northumbria, was in its turn almost destroyed. The effect, however, of the Norman Conquest, although quite as far-reaching, was more indirect than that of the Danish. The Normans did not, like the Danes, break up or confuse Anglo-Saxon by direct conflict; but their domination, by interrupting the tradition of the language, by destroying its

literature and culture, by reducing to it the speech of uneducated peasants, simply removed the conservative influence of education, and allowed the forces which had been long at work to act unchecked; and English, being no longer spoken by the cultivated classes or taught in the schools, developed as a popular spoken language with great rapidity.

Each man wrote, as far as he wrote at all, in the dialect he spoke; phonetic changes that had appeared in speech were now recorded in writing; these changes, by levelling terminations, produced confusion, and that confusion led to instinctive search for new means of expression; word-order became more fixed; the use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs to express the meanings of lost inflections increased, and the greater unity of England under the Norman rule helped in the diffusion of the advanced and simplified forms of the north. We even find, what is a very rare thing in the history of grammar, that some foreign pronouns were actually adopted from another language—namely, the Danish words *she*, *they*, *them*, *their*, which had replaced the

Anglo-Saxon forms in the north, and were gradually adopted into the common speech. From the north, too, spread the use of the genitive and plural in *s* for nearly all nouns, and not only for those of one declension.

Although the development of English was gradual, and there is at no period a definite break in its continuity, it may be said to present three main periods of development—the Old, the Middle, and the Modern, which may be distinguished by their grammatical characteristics. These have been defined by Dr. Sweet as first, the period of full inflections, which may be said to last down to A.D. 1200; the period of Middle English, of levelled inflections, from 1200 to 1500; and that of Modern English, or lost inflections, from 1500 to the present time.

Although the grammar of the language by the end of the Middle English period was fixed in its main outlines, there has, nevertheless, been some change and development since that time. Thus the northern *are* for *be*, spread southwards in the early part of the XVIth Century, and became current towards its end, where it appears in Shakespeare and

the Authorized Version of the Bible, and it has now in modern times almost supplanted the southern *be* in the subjunctive mood. The use of auxiliary verbs to express various shades of meaning, although it had begun in the Old, and developed in the Middle English period, has been greatly extended in modern times. The distinction in meaning between *I write* and *I am writing*, between the habitual and the actual present, is a modern innovation; and another modern development which expresses a useful shade of meaning is that of the emphatic present with the auxiliary *do*, "I do think," "I do believe," as contrasted with the less emphatic "I think," "I believe." Both forms existed in Old English, but until the XVIIth Century no clear distinction was made between them, as we see in the biblical phrase "and they did eat and were all filled." The XVIIth Century saw also the adoption of the neuter possessive pronoun *its*, which is first found in 1598, but which is not used in the Bible of 1611, nor in any of Shakespeare's plays printed in his lifetime. The use of nouns as adjectives, the "attributive noun," as it is called, as in "garden

flowers," "railway train," etc., is a new and most useful innovation, which has come into use since the period of Old English, and has been greatly developed in modern times. There is nothing quite like it in any other language except Chinese, and it is a great step in advance towards that ideal language in which meaning is expressed, not by terminations, but by the simple method of word position. And following also this line of development we find a curious case in modern English when the termination used for inflection, the *s* of the English genitive, has become detached from its noun and used almost as a separate word. This is the group genitive, as in "the King of England's son," instead of "the King's son of England," and in colloquial speech we can even use a phrase such as "the man I saw yesterday's hat." Here the *s* of the genitive has become detached from its noun, and made into a sign with the abstract character of a mathematical symbol. One of the most modern developments of English grammar, which dates from the end of the XVIIIth Century, is a new imperfect passive, as in the phrase "the

house is being built," for the older "the house is building," or "is a-building."

These modern instances will prove that the development of grammar is not a matter entirely depending, as has sometimes been thought, upon historical causes, or upon phonetic change. Historical accidents, and the decay of terminations, no doubt help in the creation of new forms, but are not themselves the cause of their creation. Behind all the phenomena of changing form we are aware of the action of a purpose, an intelligence, incessantly modifying and making use of this decadence of sound, this wear and tear of inflections, and patiently forging for itself, out of the débris of grammatical ruin, new instruments for a more subtle analysis of thought, and a more delicate expression of every shade of meaning. It is an intelligence which takes advantage of the smallest accidents to provide itself with new resources; and it is only when we analyse and study the history of some new grammatical contrivance that we become aware of the long and patient labour which has been required to embody in a new and convenient form a long train of

reasoning. And yet we only know this force by its workings; it is not a conscious or deliberate, but a corporate will, an instinctive sense of what the people wish their language to be; and although we cannot predict its actions, yet, when we examine its results, we cannot but believe that thought and intelligent purpose have produced them. This corporate will is, indeed, like other human manifestations, often capricious in its working, and not all its results are worthy of approval. It sometimes blurs useful distinctions, preserves others that are unnecessary, allows admirable tools to drop from its hands; its methods are often illogical and childish, in some ways it is unduly and obstinately conservative, while it allows of harmful innovations in other directions. Yet, on the whole, its results are beyond all praise; it has provided an instrument for the expression, not only of thought, but of feeling and imagination, fitted for all the needs of man, and far beyond anything that could ever have been devised by the deliberation of the wisest and most learned experts.

When the early physicists became aware

of forces they could not understand, they tried to escape their difficulty by personifying the laws of nature and inventing "spirits" that controlled material phenomena. The student of language, in the presence of the mysterious power which creates and changes language, has been compelled to adopt this medieval procedure, and has vaguely defined, by the name of "the Genius of the Language," the power that guides and controls its progress. If we ask ourselves who are the ministers of this power, and whence its decrees derive their binding force, we cannot find any definite answer to our question. It is not the grammarians or philologists who form or carry out its decisions; for the philologists disclaim all responsibility, and the schoolmasters and grammarians generally oppose, and fight bitterly, but in vain, against the new developments. We can, perhaps, find its nearest analogy in what, among social insects, we call, for lack of a more scientific name, "the Spirit of the Hive." This "spirit," in societies of bees, is supposed to direct their labours on a fixed plan, with intelligent consideration of needs and opportunities; and

although proceeding from no fixed authority, it is yet operative in each member of the community. And so in each one of us the Genius of the Language finds an instrument for the carrying out of its decrees. We each of us possess, in a greater or less degree, what the Germans call "speech-feeling," a sense of what is worthy of adoption and what should be avoided and condemned. This in almost all of us is an instinctive process; we feel the advantages or disadvantages of new forms and new distinctions, although we should be hard put to it to give a reason for our feeling. We know, for instance, that it is now wrong to say "much" rather than "many thanks," though Shakespeare used the phrase; that "much happier" is right, though the old "much happy" is wrong, and that *very* must in many cases take the place once occupied by *much*. We say a picture was *hung*, but a murderer was *hanged*, often, perhaps, without being conscious that we make the distinction; and we all of us, probably, observe the modern and subtle difference between *borne* and *born*, the two past participles of the verb to *bear*, as when

we write "*borne* by a slave mother," but "*born* of a slave," although few of us realize the subtle distinction between actual bringing forth, and the more general notion of coming into existence, on which this difference is based.

One of the most elaborate and wonderful achievements of the Genius of the Language in modern times is the differentiation of the uses of *shall* and *will*, a distinction not observed in Shakespeare and the Bible, and so complicated that it can hardly be mastered by those born in parts of the British Islands in which it has not yet been established.

Grammarians can help this corporate will by registering its decrees and extending its analogies; but they fight against it in vain. They were not able to banish the imperfect passive "the house is being built," which some of them declared was an outrage on the language; the phrase "different to" has been used by most good authors in spite of their protests; and if the Genius of the Language finds the split infinitive useful to express certain shades of thought, we can safely guess that all opposition to it will be futile.

Better guides are to be found in our great writers, in whom this sense of language is highly developed; and it is in them, if in any one, that this power finds its most efficient ministers. But even they can only select popular forms, or at the most suggest new ones; but the adoption or rejection of these depends on the enactments of the popular will, whose decrees, carried in no legislature, and subject to no veto, are final and without appeal.

CHAPTER II

FOREIGN ELEMENTS

If the Norman Conquest had but an indirect influence on the development of English grammar, on the other part of the language, the vocabulary, its effect was so great as almost to transform the character of our speech. Old English contained but a small proportion of borrowed words; but when it ceased to be a literary language, and almost

all its learned compounds perished, their place was gradually taken by words borrowed from the French speech of the Norman invaders.

The character of the words now borrowed, the objects and ideas they denoted, are full of significance for our early history, and they will be treated from this point of view in a later chapter. We are now concerned, however, for the present, more with their formal aspect—their shapes, the sources whence they were derived, and the transformations they had undergone before they reached us. The conquest of England by the Normans was the third invasion of this island by a Teutonic race from countries across the German Sea; for the Normans were closely related both to the Anglo-Saxons and to their subsequent Danish conquerors, and originally they spoke a language allied to the Anglo-Saxon. But they had travelled far, and acquired much, since they had left their remote Scandinavian birthplace. For 150 years before they came to England they had been settled in Normandy, where they had lost almost all memory of their original speech, and had adopted a new religion, a new system of law and

society, new thoughts and new manners. They therefore came practically as Frenchmen to their English and Danish cousins; and it was the speech of France, the civilization of France that they brought with them. But the speech of France was a very different language from Modern French as we know it; indeed, there was not, at this time, any recognized and classical French, but only a number of dialects, among which that of Normandy was the one which was first introduced into England. These French dialects were descended from the popular and colloquial Latin once common in most of the Roman Provinces, but which underwent divers changes in various regions—changes which have produced the various related forms of speech—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.—which are united under the common name of Romance languages. These Latin words suffered many transformations in becoming French; many of the consonants and vowels were so changed, and the words were so shortened and clipped by the omission of unaccented syllables, that their connection with their Latin ancestors is often not very

apparent. As later in the history of English many of these words came into the language in forms more nearly approaching their Latin originals, we can see by comparing them with those adopted from the French, after they had undergone the process of phonetic decay, how greatly they had been changed in that process. Thus *compute* and *count* both descend from the Latin *computare; secure* and *sure*, *blaspheme* and *blame*, *dominion* and *dungeon*, *dignity* and *dainty*, *cadence* and *chance* are others among these "doublets," as they are called, in which the longer form of the word in each case is more directly from the Latin, while the shorter has suffered a French transformation.

But the French language has undergone considerable and more recent changes since the date when the Normans brought it into England. Some words that we borrowed have become obsolete in their native country, some consonants have been dropped, and the sound of others has been changed; we retain, for instance, the *s* that the French have lost in many words like *beast* and *feast*, which are *bête* and *fête* in Modern French. So, too, the sound of *ch* has become *sh* in France·

but in our words of early borrowing, like *chamber*, *charity*, etc., we keep the old pronunciation. We keep, moreover, in many cases forms peculiar to the Norman dialect, as *caitiff*, *canker*, *carrion*, etc., in which *c* before *a* did not become *ch*, as it did in the Parisian dialect; *cark* and *charge* are both from the same Latin word *carricare*, but one is the Norman and the other the Parisian form of the word. In many cases the *g* of Norman French was changed to *j* in the Central dialects, and our word *gaol* has preserved its northern spelling, while it is pronounced, and sometimes written, with the *j* of Parisian French.

When in the year 1204 Normandy was lost to the English Crown, and the English Normans were separated from their relatives on the Continent, their French speech began to change, as all forms of speech must change, and developed into a dialect of its own, with some peculiar forms, and many words borrowed from the English. This was at first the language of the court and law in England; it was taught in the schools and written in legal enactments, and continued to be used by

lawyers for more than three hundred years. Indeed, in the form of what is called "Law French" it continued in use down to quite recent times. An attempt was indeed made in the XIVth Century to replace French by English in the law courts, but the lawyers went on thinking and writing in French, and developed little by little a queer jargon of their own, which continued in use down to the end of the XVIIth Century. From this dialect or technical law-jargon many words were adopted into English, not only strictly legal terms like *jury*, *larceny*, *lease*, *perjury*, etc., but other words which have gained a more popular use—as *assets*, *embezzle*, *disclaim*, *distress*, *hue and cry*, *hotchpotch*, *improve*. One of the most curious of these is the word *culprit*, which is a contraction of the legal phrase "*culpable; prest*," meaning "(he is) guilty (and we are) ready (to prove it)."

It was, then, from this Anglo- or Norman French that the earliest of our French words were derived, and the greater part of those borrowed before 1350 were probably from this source. In the meantime, however, the Central or Parisian French dialect, having

become the language of the French Court and of French literature, began to be fashionable in England, and many words were adopted from it into English. It is by no means always easy to distinguish between the sources of French words, whether they came to us from Anglo- or Parisian French. In many cases the forms are the same, but as a rule the early and popular words may be put down to Anglo-French, and the later adoptions and the learned words to borrowings from the literary language of Paris.

In addition to these two classes, the first borrowings from Anglo-French, and the later ones from the Parisian French, we have in English a third class of words borrowed from French in more recent times. Speaking in general terms we may say that down to about 1650 the French words that were borrowed were thoroughly naturalized in English, and were made sooner or later to conform to the rules of English pronunciation and accent; while in the later borrowings (unless they have become very popular) an attempt is made to pronounce them in the French fashion. The tendency in English is to put the accent on

the first syllable, and this has affected the words of older adoption. But in words more recently borrowed, like *grimace*, *bizarre*, etc., we throw the accent forward to imitate as nearly as we can the French accent. Words have sometimes been borrowed twice, as *gentle* and *genteel*, *dragon* and *dragoon*, *gallant* and *gallánt;* and the older can easily be distinguished from the later by the position of the accent. If words like *baron*, *button*, *mutton*, had been recent and not old borrowings we should have pronounced them *baroon*, *buttoon*, *muttoon*, as we pronounce *buffoon*, *cartoon*, *balloon*, and many others derived from the French words ending in *on*. In these modern borrowings, moreover, we preserve as much as we can the modern pronunciation of the French consonants, as we can see in the soft *ch* of *chandelier* and *chaperon* (as compared with the older *chandler* and *chapel*) and the soft *g* in *massage*, *mirage*, *prestige*, while the older sound is kept in *message* and *cabbage*.

There are no words in English so unfixed and fluctuating as these late borrowings from the French, and there is often no standard

by which we can decide how we are to speak them. Some, like *envelope* and *avalanche*, have two pronunciations, one English, and one as nearly French as possible, and one word, *vase*, is spoken in at least three ways. As so often in the case of language, we find two tendencies at work, one following the old rule to pronounce the words as English words, to give the vowels and consonants their English sounds, and to throw back the accent. This affects words which have become popular and familiar and are in common use, like *glacier* and *valet*. The other tendency, which seems to be growing stronger in recent years, is to keep as much as possible the foreign sounds and accent, as in *promenade*, *croquet*, *trait*, *mirage*, *prestige*, *rouge*, *ballet*, *débris*, *nuance*. This tendency, due, perhaps, to the wider study of French, has had a curious effect in changing the pronunciation and spelling of a number of old-established and long-naturalized words. Thus *biscuit*, which, in the form of *bisket*, is found as an old English word, has recently put on a French costume, although its pronunciation has not yet been changed, and *blue* has been altered from the older *blew*

owing to French influence. Several old words have had their accent changed by the same cause. *Police* is an old word in English, and still retains its English accent (like *malice*) in parts of Ireland and Scotland; and our old word *marine* has had its pronunciation changed, owing to the influence of the French *marine*. Even a word like *invalid*, of Latin origin, has (when used as a noun) thrown its accent forward to correspond to the French *invalide*. This tendency to give a foreign character to old-established words is a curious manifestation of that capricious force called the Genius of the Language; when a word has what we may call a French or foreign meaning, as in *rouge* or *ballet*, a foreign pronunciation, or an attempt at it, may perhaps make it more expressive; but there is surely no reason why such words as *trait* and *vase* should not be pronounced after the English fashion; and we might well be spared the discomfort and embarrassment of our attempts to keep the nasal sound of the French *n* in words like *encore, ennui, nonchalant, nuance*.

As we have seen, the main additions to the English language, additions so great as to

change its character in a fundamental way, were from the French, first of all from the Northern French of the Norman Conquerors, and then from the literary and learned speech of Paris. But the French language, as we have also seen, is mainly based on Latin—not on the Latin of classical literature, but the popular spoken language, the speech of the soldiers and uneducated people; and the Latin words were so clipped, changed, and deformed by them (not, however, capriciously, but in accordance with certain definite laws) that they are often at first unrecognizable. From early times, however, a large number of Latin words were taken into French, and thence into English, from literary Latin; and as they were never used in popular speech, they did not undergo this process of popular transformation.

But when we speak of learned words adopted from the Latin, we must not suppose that the scholars and literary men of that time borrowed, as we should now borrow, from the classical Latin studied in our schools, the language of the great orators and poets of Rome. The Latin from which they borrowed

was not a dead, but a living language, a language which they spoke and wrote, and which, although it was descended from classical Latin, and preserved many of its forms, yet differed from it in many ways, and was regarded as barbarous by the scholars of the Renaissance. It was the speech of a small minority, of a few thousand learned men, almost all in religious orders, an aristocracy intellectual and cosmopolitan, who preserved in the Dark Ages something of the literary tradition of classical times, and made to it important contributions of their own. It was a universal language for the scholars of all Europe; and, even in England, men from different districts could converse in it better than in their local and often mutually unintelligible dialects. It disappeared at last in the XVIth Century, owing to the efforts of the Humanists and the Ciceronians to restore the classical language of Rome, but not before it had had an immense effect on modern French and English. By far the greater part of the learned Latin words adopted into French, and from French into English, from the IXth to the XIVth

Centuries are derived from this Low Latin; many of them are, of course, classical in form, but many, especially the abstract words, have been formed by the addition of terminations in the medieval Latin. In the XIVth Century, however, when the first effects of the classical renaissance began to make themselves felt, words began to be borrowed into French direct from Classical Latin: this process went on with increased rapidity in the XVth Century; and towards its end, and at the beginning of the XVIth Century, almost a new language formed on classical models was created in France.

With the importation, therefore, of the French vocabulary into English, many of the learned words borrowed first from Late, and then from Classical Latin, were adopted into our language. But in England also Latin was spoken by the clergy and learned men of the country, the Bible and the service-books were in Latin, and historical and devotional books were largely written in it. When these Latin books were translated into English, or when a scholar writing in English wished to use a Latin word, he followed the analogy

of the Latin words that had already come to us through the French, and altered them as if they had first been adopted into French. It is often, therefore, difficult to say whether a Latin word has come to us through the French, or has been taken immediately from the Latin.

A curious tendency, due not so much to the genius of the language as to the self-conscious action of learned people, has affected the form of Latin words both in English and French, but more drastically, perhaps, on this side of the Channel. From early times a feeling has existed that the popular forms of words were incorrect, and attempts more or less capricious, and often wrong, have been made to change back the words to shapes more in accordance with their original spelling. Thus the *h* was added to words like *umble*, *onour*, *abit*, etc.; *b* was inserted in *debt* (to show its derivation from the Latin *debitum*), and *l* in *fault*, as a proof of its relation to the Latin *fallere*, and *p* found its way into *receipt* as a token of the Latin *receptum*. These pedantic forms were either borrowed direct into English from the French, or in many old words the

change was made by English scholars; and in some words, as for instance *debt* and *fault*, their additions have remained in English, while in French the words have reverted to their old spelling. These changes, as in *honour*, *debt*, *receipt*, do not always affect the pronunciation; but in many words, as *vault*, *fault*, *assault*, the letters pedantically inserted have come gradually to be pronounced. *Fault* rhymed with *thought* in the XVIIIth Century, and only in the XIXth Century has *h* come to be pronounced in *humble* and *hospital*. More inexcusable are the many errors introduced into English spelling by old pedantry, and among our words which have been deformed by this learned ignorance may be mentioned *advance* and *advantage* (properly *avance* and *avantage*) and *scent* and *scissors*, which should have been spelt *sent* and *sissors*.

The borrowing of words direct from the Latin, which began first in prehistoric times, continued in the Anglo-Saxon period, and only attained large proportions in the XIVth and XVth Centuries; but it has continued uninterruptedly ever since, until perhaps one-fourth of the Latin vocabulary has been

transplanted, either directly or through the French, into the English language. While most of these words are re-formed in English according to definite usage, nouns being taken from the stem of the accusative, and verbs from that of the past participle, there is really no absolute rule save that of convenience about the matter. The nominative form appears as in *terminus*, *bonus*, *stimulus*, etc., the ablative in *folio*, the gerund in *memorandum* and *innuendo*, different parts of the verb as in *veto* and *affidavit*. *Recipe* is the imperative directing the apothecary to take certain drugs, and *dirge* is from another imperative, the *dirige*, *Domine* of Psalm v. 8, used as an antiphon in the service for the dead.

As French was full of learned Latin words, so Latin in its turn abounded in expressions borrowed from the Greek, and thus Greek words were through the Latin adopted into French and English. With one or two very early exceptions to be mentioned later, all the Greek words found in English before the XVIth Century are derived from Latin sources, and are spelt and pronounced, not as they were in Greek, but as the Romans

spelt and pronounced them. The Greek *u* became a *y* in Latin, and the *k* a *c;* when after the Roman time *c* lost the sound of *k* before *e* and *i* and *y*, the pronunciation of many Greek words was changed, and we get a word like the modern *cycle*, which is very unlike the Greek *kuklos*. Other Greek words have been early adopted into the popular vocabulary, and have undergone the strange transformations that popular words undergo. Learned names for diseases and flowers are peculiarly liable to be affected by this process; thus *dropsy* stands for the Greek *hydropsis*, *palsy* for *paralysis*, *emerald* for the Greek *smaragdos; athanasia* has become *tansy*, and *karuophyllon gillyflower* in English. This process still goes on whenever a Greek word comes into common and popular use; *pediment* is believed to be a workingman's corruption, through *perimint*, of *pyramid; banjo* has come to us through the pronunciation of negro slaves from the Spanish *bandurria*, which is ultimately derived from the Greek *pandoura;* and we are now witnessing the struggle of the Genius of the Language with the popular but somewhat indigestible word *cinematograph*.

By the middle of the XVIth Century, Greek was so well known in England that scholars began to borrow from it directly, without the intervention of French and Latin. These were all learned adoptions, and they were for the most part conducted in an absurdly learned way; these old scholars took a pedantic pride in adorning their pages with the actual Greek letters, and thus words like *acme*, *apotheosis*, and many others are in XVIth and XVIIth Century books often printed in Greek type. Very lately in the XIXth Century a tendency has shown itself to adopt words, not with the Latin, but with the original Greek spelling (as nearly as we can reproduce it), and now, with our modern passion for correctness, and the modern weakening of the traditions of the language, words, especially scientific terms, tend to keep their Greek appearance, as we see in a word like *kinetics*, which would have become *cinetics* had it been borrowed earlier.

This short account of the Greek element in English must suffice for the present, although the enormous influence of Greek on our language is by no means to be measured by

the number of Greek words in English. For a very large part of our vocabulary of thought and culture comes from Greece by means of literal translations into Latin. Of these words we shall speak when we come to the history of thought and culture, and in that division of our subject we can best treat of our later borrowings from modern languages, such as Dutch and Spanish, and all the travellers' words brought into English from Indian, African, and American languages. There remain, however, three other elements of early English—the Celtic, the Scandinavian, and the Teutonic words that have come to us through French or Italian channels.

It is one of the puzzles of English philology that so very few words of Celtic origin have been adopted into the language. The Teutonic invaders found and conquered a Celtic race dwelling in England; there is evidence to show that the conquered race was not entirely massacred, but that a large portion of it was united with the conquerors, and yet the number of Celtic words adopted into English before the XIIth Century is less than

a dozen, and several of these were probably imported from Ireland or the Continent. *Bin* and *dun* (a colour), *coomb* (a small valley), and one or two more words are the only ones that seem to have been derived from the native British; and *down* (a hill) may have been borrowed from them, or perhaps brought by the Anglo-Saxons into England. Since 1200 more words have been adopted from Irish or Scotch Gaelic, but most of these, like *brogue, bog, galore, pillion, shamrock*, are of fairly recent introduction; and it is certainly very curious that no word of any great importance has been borrowed by the English from their Welsh-speaking neighbours. Many more Celtic words have come into our language indirectly through French channels. The Romans borrowed a few Celtic terms; the original inhabitants of Gaul were Celts, the Bretons still speak a Celtic language, and from these sources a number of Celtic words have found their way into French, and from French into English. Among these words of probable or possible Celtic origin may be mentioned *battle, beak, bray* (of a donkey), *budget, car* (and its deriva-

tives, *career, cargo, cark, carry, cart, charge, chariot,* etc.), *carpenter, gravel, league, mutton, tan, truant, valet, varlet, vassal.* Many more words than these are commonly given as being of Celtic origin, but the tendency of modern scholarship is to decrease the number of Celtic words in English: and even in the above list many are considered to be very doubtful. One curious and charming form is found in the Irish-English with which we have been delighted lately, namely a literal translation of Celtic idioms into English, as in such phrases as "Is herself at home?" "Is it reading you are?" "He interrupted me, and I writing my letters."

The French not only brought us a number of Celtic words, but an even larger number of native Teutonic terms came back to our Teutonic speech through French channels —words that we had lost, words that had arisen in Germany after our ancestors came to England, or Frenchified forms which supplanted the Anglo-Saxon words derived from the same source. The Teutonic barbarians who served in the Roman armies added some words to the Latin language; the Franks

who conquered France and gave their name to that country, the Gothic and Burgundian invaders, enriched the French language with many terms of war, of feudalism, and of sport; and finally the Norman Conquerors of the XIth Century added a few terms, mostly nautical, of their original Scandinavian speech, such as *equip, flounder* (the fish), and perhaps the verb to *sound.* Nearly three hundred Teutonic words altogether have come to us from French sources, and form no inconsiderable or unimportant addition to the language. Moreover, if we compare these travelled words with their stay-at-home relations, we can in many cases see what richness of meaning they have gained by being steeped in the great Romance civilization of Europe. *Park*, for instance, is a Teutonic word, ennobled by French usage far beyond the meaning of its humble native cousin *paddock; blue*, by passing through southern minds, has acquired a brilliance not to be found in our dialect *blae*, of dark and dingy colour; our *bench* has become through Italian the *bank* of finance, and has given rise to *banquet;* and among other homely old German words thus

embellished by their foreign travels may be mentioned *dance*, *garden*, *gaiety*, *salon*, *harbinger*, *gonfalon*, *banner*, and *herald*.

The other great Teutonic addition to the English language is that from Scandinavian sources. When the Danes came to England, they brought with them a language now called "Old Norse," which was closely related to Anglo-Saxon. Many of the words, however, were different, and a large number of these were ultimately taken into English. As, however, our earliest English literature was almost all written in the dialect of the South, where the Danes did not settle, but few Scandinavian words appear in English before the XIIth Century. When, however, the language of the Midlands and the North, where there were large Danish settlements, began to be written, the strong infusion of Scandinavian elements became apparent. And from the northern dialects, which abound in Old Norse words, standard English has ever since been borrowing terms; a great army of them appear in the XIIIth Century, words so strong and vigorous as to drive out their Anglo-Saxon equivalents, as *take* and *cast*

replaced the Anglo-Saxon *niman* and *weorpan*, and *raise* has driven the old English *rear* into the archaic language of poetry. Even when the English words have survived, they have sometimes been assimilated to the Scandinavian form, as in words like *give* and *sister*. Other familiar words of Scandinavian origin are *call, fellow, get, hit, leg, low, root, same, skin, want, wrong*. The familiar everyday and useful character of these words shows how great is the Danish influence on the language, and how strongly the Scandinavian element persisted when the two races were amalgamated. This drifting into standard English of Scandinavian words from northern dialects still goes on; the following words are possibly of Scandinavian origin, and have made their appearance from dialects into literary English at about the dates which are appended to them: *billow* (1552), to *batten* (1591), *clumsy* (1597), *blight* (1619), *doze* (1647), *gill* or *ghyll* (a steep ravine, Wordsworth, 1787), a *beck* (a stream, Southey, 1795), to *nag* (1835), and to *scamp* (1837).

It is from these and some other minor sources, to be mentioned later, that English

has derived its curiously mixed character, and the great variety and richness of its vocabulary. No purist has ever objected to the Teutonic words that have come to us from Scandinavian or French sources; but the upsetting of so large a part of the French, Latin, and Greek vocabularies into English speech is a more or less unique phenomenon in the history of language, and its supposed advantages or disadvantages have been the subject of much discussion. Writers who attempt to criticize and estimate the value of different forms of speech often begin with an air of impartiality, but soon arrive at the comfortable conclusion that their own language, owing to its manifest advantages, its beauties, its rich powers of expression, is on the whole by far the best and noblest of all living forms of speech. The Frenchman, the German, the Italian, the Englishman, to each of whom his own literature and the great traditions of his national life are most dear and familiar, cannot help but feel that the vernacular in which these are embodied and expressed is, and must be, superior to the alien and awkward languages

of his neighbours; nor can he easily escape the conclusion that in respect to his own speech, whatever has happened has been an advantage, and whatever is is good.

It will be as well, therefore, in regard to this question of a mixed vocabulary, to state as impartially as is humanly possible the considerations on which the two opposing ideals are based—the ideal of a pure language, built up as much as possible on native sources, and that of a comprehensive speech, borrowing the words from other nations.

Let us begin with the ideal of "purity," which in many European languages, such as German, Bohemian, and modern Greek, is leading to determined efforts to keep out foreign words, and to drive out those that have already been adopted. The upholders of this ideal maintain that extensive borrowing from other nations is a proof of want of imagination, and a certain weakness of mental activity; that a people who cannot, or do not, take the trouble to find native words for new conceptions, show thereby the poverty of their invention, and the weakness of their "speech-feeling." The desire to use foreign

terms comes, these patriots of language believe, partly also from vanity, to show one's familiarity with foreign culture; and they claim that the use of native compounds for abstract ideas is a great advantage, as it enables even the uneducated to obtain some notion of the meaning of these high terms. They maintain, moreover, that just as an old-fashioned farmer prided himself on procuring the main staples of life from his own farm and garden, and found a fresher taste in the fruit and vegetables of his own growing, so we find in words which are the product of our own soil, and are akin to the ancient terms of our speech, an intimate meaning, and a beauty not possessed by exotic products. These words breed in us a proud sense of the old and noble race from which we are descended; they link the present to the past, and carry on the tradition of our nation to the new generations. The Main upholders of this view are the modern Germans, who take a great pride in the purity of their language, and compare it to that of Greece, which, in spite of the immense influence on it of Eastern civilization, and the

great number of ideas and products it borrowed from thence, yet has so strong a feeling for language, and so great a pride of race, that the Greek of classical times possessed no more than a few hundred words borrowed from other tongues.

In Germany, therefore, since the XVIIth Century, a deliberate effort has arisen to make the language still more pure, and societies have been formed for this especial purpose. This movement has grown with the growth of national unity, and a powerful society, the *Sprachverein*, has been recently founded, and has published handbooks of native words for almost every department of modern life.

Although English is so hopelessly mixed a language that any such attempt to "purify" it would be hopeless, nevertheless the use of Saxon words has often been advocated among us, and even here lists have been suggested of native compounds that might replace some of our foreign terms; as *steadholder* for lieutenant, *whimwork* for grotesque, *folkward* for parapet, and *folkwain* for omnibus.

Those, however, who defend a mixed lan-

guage like Latin or English, maintain that the ideal of purity is really in its essence a political and not a philological one; that it is due to political aspirations or resentments; that the Germans desire to banish, with their French words, the memory of the long literary and political domination of France over their native country; that for the same reason the Bohemians wish to rid themselves of German words, the modern Greeks of Turkish terms. They hold that the patriots in language are the victims also of a fallacy which all history disproves—the fallacy, namely, that there is some connection between the purity of language and the purity of race; that most modern races, however pure their language, are of mixed origins, and that many races speak a tongue borrowed either from their conquerors, or from the peoples they have themselves subdued. And as we are all of mixed race, so our civilization is equally derived from various sources; ideas, products, and inventions spread from one nation to another, and finally become the common inheritance of humanity, and they hold it, therefore, a natural process for foreign names to spread with foreign

ideas, and to form a common vocabulary, the beginnings of an international speech, in which we can all, to some extent, at least understand each other. An independent nation, conscious of its strength, and not afraid of being overwhelmed by foreign influences, does well, therefore, in their view, to welcome the foreign names of foreign products. It does not thus corrupt, but really enriches its language; and even when, as in English, it possesses a multitude of synonyms, partly native and partly foreign, for more or less the same conceptions, this variety of terms is a great advantage; for the Genius of the Language, which works more by making use of existing terms than by creating them, is enabled to give to each a different shade of meaning. Thus, as Mr. Bradley points out, the subtle shades of difference of meaning, of emotional significance, between such pairs of words in English as *paternal* and *fatherly*, *fortune* and *luck*, *celestial* and *heavenly*, *royal* and *kingly*, could not easily be rendered in any other language. While the upholders of this view would admit that the words of Saxon origin are as a rule more vivid and expressive,

they maintain that this expressiveness is largely due to the existence with them of less vivid synonyms from the Latin, and that these words, moreover, can be appropriately employed for statements in which we wish to avoid over-emphasis, a force of diction stronger than the feelings we wish to express, which is a fault of style as reprehensible and often more annoying than inadequate expression. The great demand, moreover, in an age of science is for clearness of thought and precise definition in language rather than for emotional power, and it is often an advantage for the expression of abstract ideas, to possess terms borrowed for this purpose only from a foreign language, which express their abstract meaning and nothing more, unhindered by the rich but confusing associations of native etymology. From this point of view abstract words like our *intuition*, *perception*, *representation*, are much clearer than their German equivalents; *osteology* and *pathology* to be preferred to *bonelore* and *painlore*, which have been suggested by Saxon enthusiasts to take their place. And even for the purposes of poetry and association, they

believe that it is no small gain that the descendants of rude Teutonic tribes, inhabiting a remote and northern island, should become the inheritors of the traditions of the great Greek and Latin civilization of the South These traditions, the rich accumulations of poetic and historic memories, are embodied in, and cling to, the great classical words we have borrowed; *magnanimity*, *omnipotence*, *palace*, *contemplate*, still give echoes to us of the greatness of ancient Rome; and the arts and lofty thought of Greece still live in great Greek words like *philosophy*, *astronomy*, *poem*, *planet*, *idea*, and *tragedy*.

These, then, are the two opposing ideals—nationalism in language, as against borrowing; a pure, as opposed to a mixed, language. To those for whom nationalism is the important thing in modern life, and who could wish that their own race should derive its language and thought from native sources, a "pure" language is the ideal form of speech; while those who regard the great inheritance of European culture as the element of most importance in civilization, will not regret the composite character of the

English language, the happy marriage which it shows of North and South, or wish to deprive it of those foreign elements which go to make up its unparalleled richness and variety.

CHAPTER III

MODERN ENGLISH

THE flooding of the English vocabulary with French words began, as we have seen, in the XIIIth Century, and reached very large proportions in the century that followed. At the same time Anglo-French, which had maintained itself for two hundred years or more as the language of the governing classes, gradually fell into disuse, and in 1362 English was adopted in the law courts, and at about the same time in the schools. And yet, properly speaking, there was before the latter part of the XIVth Century no English language, no standard form of speech, understood by all, and spoken everywhere by the educated classes. When such restraining and

conservative influence as was exercised by the West-Saxon language of the court had been removed at the Conquest, the centrifugal forces, which are always present in language, and tend to split it up into varieties of speech, had begun to assert themselves; and the old dialects of England diverged, until the inhabitants of each part of the country could hardly understand each other. The dialects of this period can be roughly divided into three main divisions, which correspond to the divisions of speech in the pre-Conquest period, but are called by new names. In all the country south of the Thames, what is called the Southern dialect was spoken, and this was a descendant of the West-Saxon speech which, under Alfred the Great, had become the literary language of England. North of the Thames there were two main dialects: the Midland, corresponding to the Old Mercian; and the Northern, extending from the Humber to Aberdeen, and corresponding to the Old Northumbrian. In each of these districts authors, as far as they wrote in English at all, wrote in their own native dialect; and in the middle of the

XIVth Century it must have seemed that the development of no common form of English speech was possible. But as at first the Northern, or Northumbrian, dialect had developed in the VIIIth Century into a literary language, and then had been replaced by the Southern or West-Saxon, so now the neglected speech of Mercia, the Midland, was destined to attain that supremacy which it has since never lost. The Southern dialect was very conservative of old forms and inflections; in the Northern, owing to the Danish settlements, changes had been rapidly going on, so that these two had become almost separate languages. The Midland, however, less progressive than the Northern, but more advanced than the Southern, stood between the two, and was more or less comprehensible to the speakers of each dialect. Moreover, the Midland, being the speech of London, naturally became familiar to men of business and of the educated classes, who frequented the capital; and it was the language of the two great universities as well. Philologists divide this Midland dialect into two subdivisions: West Midland, which was more

conservative and archaic in type; and East Midland, which had been more affected by Danish influence, and was somewhat more progressive than the West. It was, then, this East Midland, spoken in England and in Oxford and Cambridge, which was adopted as our standard speech.

This result was no doubt greatly helped by the greatest man of literary genius in this period, the poet Chaucer. The part played by Ennius in the formation of classical Latin is well known; Dante did much to form modern Italian, the German language owes an immense debt to Luther; and in the same way Chaucer has been claimed as the "Father of the English language." This view has, indeed, been recently disputed, and it is now admitted that the Midland dialect would have become the standard speech, even if Chaucer had never written. At the same time, but for his influence, and the great popularity of his writings, this process would probably have been more hesitating and slow. He found, indeed, an already cultivated language in the Midland dialect, but he wrote it with an ease, an elegance and regularity

hitherto unknown; giving it the stamp of high literature, and making it the vehicle for his wide cultivation and his knowledge of the world. A Londoner of the citizen class, a courtier as well, a traveller and diplomatist, he was admirably fitted to sum up and express in modern speech the knowledge and varied interests of his time; and when we add to this the splendid accident of genius, and the immense popularity of his poems, we see how great his influence must have been, although the exact character of that influence is not quite easy to define.

Probably in addition to the ease and polish he gave the language, Chaucer's greatest contribution was the large number of words he borrowed from French and naturalized in the language. It has, indeed, been said that there is no proof that any of the foreign words in his writings had not been used before; and this is, of course, strictly true, as it is impossible to prove a negative of this kind. But as the *Oxford Dictionary* shows, the number of these words not to be found in any previous writings now extant is really immense; to his translation of Boethius, to

his work on Astrology, to his prose and poems, are traced a large number of our great and important words, besides many learned terms, *attention, diffusion, fraction, duration, position*, first found in Chaucer, and then not apparently used again till the XVIth Century. Almost equally important in their influence on the language were the Wyclif translations of the Bible, made public at about the same time as Chaucer's poems. Wyclif, like Chaucer, wrote in the dialect of the East Midlands; like Chaucer he possessed a genius for language, and in number and importance his contributions to the English vocabulary seem (according to the results published in the *Oxford Dictionary*) to have almost, if not quite, equalled those of Chaucer. While Chaucer borrowed mainly from the French, Wyclif's new words are largely adaptations from the Latin of the Vulgate; and, as he finds it necessary to explain many of these words by notes, it is fairly certain that he himself regarded them as innovations.

With the growing importance, then, of the East Midland dialect, and with the stamp set upon it by Chaucer and Wyclif, and the

immense popularity of their writings, we witness at the end of the XIVth Century what we may consider to be the birth of the English language as we know it. Despised, ruined, and destroyed; for three centuries ousted from its pride of place by an alien tongue, and then almost swamped by the inrush of foreign words, yet, like the fabled bird of Arabia, it arose swiftly from its ashes, and spread its wings for new and hitherto unequalled flights. The English of Chaucer and Wyclif was now accepted as the standard language of the country, and all the other and rival dialects sank to the level of uneducated and local forms of speech, with the exception of one variety of the Northern or Northumbrian dialect, which was developed into the Scottish language, received a considerable amount of literary cultivation, and remained the standard speech of Scotland, until the union of the two countries at the death of Queen Elizabeth.

But although Chaucer's English is substantially the language that we speak, and there are whole pages of Chaucer that a person of ordinary education can read with little

difficulty, such a reader will perceive at once great differences between the English of the XIVth Century and that of our own day; and should he not read, but have read to him, Chaucer's poems, with their correct and contemporary pronunciation, the difference would seem still more startling. For no language, of course, ever remains unchanged, but undergoes a perpetual process of transformation; the sounds of many vowels and consonants are slowly shifted; the old words become outworn or change their meaning, and new terms are needed to replace them; and with the passing of time, fresh experiences are acquired, and new ways of thought and feeling become popular, and these also demand and find their appropriate terminology. Grammar also becomes more simple, but on the whole the change of English since Chaucer's time has been a change in vocabulary; and to this we shall return in a later chapter. There are, however, certain changes of a formal character which should be mentioned before we approach the history of the language in its connection with the history of culture.

By the end of the XIVth Century, as we have seen, the Midland dialect was established as standard English; the introduction of the printing press in the XVth Century, and especially the works printed and published by Caxton, made its supremacy undisputed, and practically fixed its form for the future. Caxton's English is, as we might expect, more modern than that of Chaucer; the spelling, although to our eyes old-fashioned, is more definite and settled, and any one of us can read Caxton's English with very little difficulty.

Two influences of the XVIth Century had a marked effect on the English language, one European and the other national. The revival of learning, the renewed study of classical Latin, the growth of the cosmopolitan Republic of learned humanists who drove out the old Low Latin of the Middle Ages and devoted themselves to the cultivation of an elegant and Ciceronian prose, made at first the enthusiasts of the new learning somewhat disdainful of their mother tongues. They saw how rapidly these native languages were changing, and naturally believed that

to write in the vernacular was to write in a local and perishing speech—awkward, moreover, and barbarous, and unfitted to embody high thoughts and scholarly distinctions. While, therefore, these scholars somewhat neglected their native tongues, or wrote in them with apologies and condescension, their study, nevertheless, of classical models, their care for the art of speech, their love of apt and beautiful words and rhythms and phrases, did much to mould the literary languages of modern Europe, and added to them many graces of style, expression, and music. Towards the middle of the XVIth Century another and opposing influence began to make itself felt. With the Reformation, and the growth of national feeling under Henry VIII and his Tudor successors, English scholars began to value more highly the institutions and the language of their own country.

The Church services were now in English; English translations of the Bible were printed, and the beauty of these services and translations opened men's eyes to the value and expressiveness of their native tongue. Eng-

lish became what it had never been before—the object of serious study; and the native element, which had tended to be overshadowed by the Latinity of the Humanists, was now more valued under the Teutonic influence of the Reformation. There were now patriots who started the ideal of a pure language, freed as much as possible from foreign elements; while others attempted, often too successfully, as we have seen, to remodel words of foreign derivation. We now reach, in fact, the stage of a self-conscious language, no longer allowed to develop at its own free will, unbound by rules or study, but affected, both for good and evil, by the theories and ideals of writers and learned men. In the Elizabethan period, however, when the influences of the classical revival and of the growth of national pride in England and things English both reached their highest mark, and were mingled together by the exuberant vitality and creative force of the time, the new ideal of "correctness" could as yet make but little headway against the opposing forces of innovation and experiment. The language was still in a plastic and un-

formed state; writers and speakers with a whole world of new thoughts to express, reached out eagerly and uncritically to every source from which they could derive means of expression—"ink-horn" terms, strange coinages, pedantic borrowings, fashions and affectations, were mingled with archaisms and sham antiques; while the needs of popular preaching and discussion brought into common and even literary use many colloquialisms and homely old Saxon words.

The result was a language of unsurpassed richness and beauty, which, however, defies all rules. To the Elizabethans it seemed as if almost any word could be used in any grammatical relation—adverbs for verbs, for nouns or adjectives, nouns and adjectives for verbs and adverbs. Thus, as Dr. Abbot points out in his *Shakespearian Grammar*, "You can *happy* your friend, *malice* or *foot* your enemy, or *fall* an axe on his neck." *A he* is used for a man, *a she* for a woman, and every variety of what is now considered bad grammar—plural nominatives with singular verbs, double negatives, double comparatives (*more better*, etc.), are commonly employed.

The end of this period of Tudor English and the beginning of modern English coincides with the appearance of a Revised Version of the English Bible, published in 1611. In the earlier part of the XVIIth Century the borrowing of learned words, especially from the Latin, though now also to a certain extent direct from the Greek, went on apace. Indeed, by now the English had adopted far more new material than it could assimilate; and at the Restoration, when a new ideal of language prevailed, and speech tended more towards the easy elegance of a cultivated man of fashion, the vocabulary was sifted, and many of these cumbrous and tremendous terms of XVIth and XVIIth Century thought and theology fell into disuse.

With the Restoration also came a new wave of French influence. Charles II and his Court had lived long in France; French fashions were supreme at the English Court, polite speech and literature was once more fitted with French expressions; and it became now, as we have seen, the custom not to naturalize these borrowed words, but to preserve as much as possible their native

pronunciation. The structure of the English sentence, moreover, was modified owing to French influence; and the stately and splendid old English prose, with its rolling sentences and involved clauses of dogmatic assertion or inspired metaphor, gave place to a more and more concise, easy, and limpid statement, without the eagle-high flights of the old English, but also without its cumbersomeness, awkwardness, and obscurity. With the learned Latin words that were now discarded, many old English terms fell into disuse, and the English language in the XVIIIth Century suffered something of the same "purification" or impoverishment which in the XVIIth Century reduced the literary vocabulary of French by an enormous number of native words.

With the Romantic Movement, however, at the end of the XVIIIth and the beginning of the XIXth Century, and with also the increased historical sense and interest in the past, many of these old words were revived; and we are probably now much nearer to Chaucer, not only in our understanding of his age, but also in our comprehension of his

language, than our ancestors were at the time when Dryden and his contemporaries found it almost incomprehensible without special study. Indeed, the fifty years between the death of Shakespeare and the Restoration created a much wider gulf between the courtiers of Charles II and those of Elizabeth than the three hundred years which divide us from that period, and Shakespeare and Spenser are much more easily comprehended by us than by the men of letters who were born not many years after the death of these great poets.

Besides the shifting of the English vocabulary and the extinction of superfluous words, another and more subtle process has been steadily going on, and has done much to enrich our language. Owing to its varied sources our language was, as we have seen, provided with a great number of synonyms—words of different form, but expressing the same meaning. But this superfluity of terms was soon turned to a good use by the ever vigilant Genius of the Language; little by little slightly different meanings began to attach themselves to these different words; each gradually asserted for itself its separate

sphere of expression, from which the others were excluded; until often two words which could originally be used indifferently have come to have quite separate and distinct meanings. This differentiation, or, as it is called, "desynonymization," of words is most plainly seen where two words, one from a Saxon and one from a Latin or Greek source, have begun with identical meanings, but have gradually diverged, as *pastor* and *shepherd*, *foresight* and *providence*, *boyish* and *puerile*, *homicide* and *murder*. Often, however, the two words are derived from the same language, as *ingenuous* and *ingenious*, *invent* and *discover*, *astrology* and *astronomy*, and many others. Or one word with two different spellings, both of which were used indifferently, has become two distinct words, each of which appropriates a part of the original meaning. Thus our word *human* was generally spelt *humane* till the beginning of the XVIIIth Century, though *human* occasionally appeared. Then, however, the distinction between what men are, and what they ought to be, arose, and *human* was adopted for the first, and the old spelling *humane* for the other

idea. So *divers* and *diverse* were originally the same word, and not distinguished in spelling till the XVIIth Century; and the distinctions between *corps* and *corpse*, *cloths* and *clothes*, *flour* and *flower* were not established before quite modern times.

These are obvious distinctions, which we can all understand at once, although the exact process which produces them remains, like so much in language, somewhat mysterious and unknown. But, as we have seen in the development of grammatical distinctions, the Genius of the Language is often extremely subtle and delicate in its analysis, so subtle that although we feel instinctively the discriminations that it makes, we cannot, without some effort, understand the distinctions of thought on which they are based. Often, indeed, our usage will be right when the reason we give for it is entirely mistaken. The human mind, half-consciously aware of infinite shades of thought and feeling which it wishes to express, chooses with admirable discrimination, though by no deliberate act, among the materials provided for it by historical causes or mere accidents of spelling,

differing forms to express its inner meaning; stamps them with the peculiar shade it wishes to express, and uses them for its delicate purposes; and thus with admirable but unforeseen design, finds a beautiful and appropriate and subtle clothing for its thought. To take a simple instance of these distinctions in the use of words, we would all speak of *riding* in an omnibus, a tramcar, or a farmer's cart, in which we were given a lift on the road, but of *driving* in a cab or carriage which we own or hire; many of us would not, however, be aware that the distinction we make between the two words is really due to the sense that in the case of the omnibus or farmer's cart the vehicle is not under our own control, while the cab or carriage is. So also in modern standard English (though not in the English of the United States) a distinction which we feel, but many of us could not define, is made between *forward* and *forwards; forwards* being used in definite contrast to any other direction, as "if you move at all, you can only move forwards," while *forward* is used where no such contrast is implied, as in the common phrase "to bring a matter forward."

Distinctions and nice discriminations of this kind are continually arising and attempting to establish themselves in the language, and we can all witness now the struggle going on to define the usages of the three adjectives *Scots*, *Scottish*, and *Scotch*. Another distinction now tending to establish itself is between the terminations of agent-nouns in *er* and *or*. We speak of *sailor*, but of a boat being a good *sailer;* of a *respecter* of persons, but an *inspector* of nuisances; or a *projector*, and the *rejecter* who opposes him. Here, again, the distinction is a somewhat subtle one, the agent-noun in *or* implying a trade or profession or habitual function, while that in *er* has no such special meaning. It is in instances of this kind, in the variations of our own speech, and that of others, that the study of words enables us to observe in little the processes and somewhat mysterious workings of those forces to which are due the perpetual change and development of national ways and usages and institutions.

CHAPTER IV

WORD-MAKING IN ENGLISH

It is not merely by borrowing from abroad, or by discriminations between already existing words, that our vocabulary is increased. New words can easily be created in English, and are being created almost every day; and a large part of our speech is made up of terms we have formed for ourselves out of old and familiar material. One of the simplest ways of forming a new word is that of making compounds, the joining together of two or more separate terms to make a third. This method of making words was very commonly employed in Greek, but was rare in classical Latin, as it is rare in French. In German it is extremely common, where almost any words can be joined together, and compounds are formed, often of enormous length. In the facility of forming compounds, English stands between the French and German; the richness of old English in this respect has been modified by

French and Latin influence; and here, as in vocabulary, English is partly Teutonic and partly French. The most common of our English compounds are those in which two nouns are joined together, the second expressing a general meaning, which is somehow modified or limited by the first. Thus, to take modern instances, a *railway* is a way formed by rails, a *steamboat* is a boat propelled by steam, a *school board* is a board which controls schools, a *board school* is one of the schools managed by that board. Words compounded in this way preserve for a while the sense of their separate existence; soon, however, they come to be spelt with a hyphen, like *lawn-tennis* or *motor-car*, and before long they are joined into one word like *rainfall* or *goldfield;* and sometimes we cease to think of them as compounds at all, and the form of one or other of the words is forgotten and transformed, as *day's eye* has become *daisy*, and *Christ's mass Christmas.*

But compounds can be formed by joining together almost any parts of speech, and sometimes more than two words are combined in a compound, as in the old *hop-o'-my-thumb*,

and in the XIXth Century *rough-and-ready*, *hard-and-fast*, *daddy-long-legs*. We have also in English a curious kind of compound verb, where an adverb is used with a verb without actual union, as to *give up*, to *break out*, etc. In this kind of formation the XIXth Century was especially rich, and gave birth to many such modern expressions as *to boil down*, *to go under*, *to hang on*, *to back down*, *to own up*, *to take over*, *to run across*. Verbs of this kind, though often colloquial, add an idiomatic power to the language, and enable it to express many fine distinctions of thought and meaning.

On the whole, however, the formation of new compounds is not of enormous importance to modern English; and the language has certainly lost some of its original power in this respect. Compounds, moreover, tend to die out more quickly than other words; the Genius of the Language seems to prefer a simple term for a simple notion; and a word made up of two others, each of which vividly suggests a separate idea, is apt to seem awkward to us unless we can conveniently forget the original meanings. Word-composition

really belongs to an earlier stage of language, where the object of speech was to appeal to the imagination and feelings rather than to the intellect; and we find, perhaps, the most vivid and idiomatic of English compounds in words of abuse and contempt like *lickspittle, skinflint, swillpot, spitfire.* The excitement of passion heats more readily than anything else the crucible of language in which is fused, ready for coining, the material for new words; and the abusive epithets of a language are always among its most picturesque and most imaginative words.

For the poets also, who, like the vituperators, make their appeal to feeling and imagination, this method of making words is most valuable; and, being allowed great freedom in this respect, they have, by their beautiful and audacious compounds, added some of the most exquisite and expressive phrases to the English language. Chaucer and the earlier poets hardly employed this method of coining epithets; but with the influence of the classical renaissance, and the translations from Homer and the Greek poets, whose works are so rich in compound epithets, this method of

expression was largely adopted, and has added to the language many compound adjectives which are little poems in themselves—Shakespeare's *young-eyed* cherubims, for instance, or Milton's *grey-hooded* even, or *coral-paven* floor.

The commonest way of making new words is by what is called derivation. We are all familiar with this method by which a prefix or suffix is added to an already existing word, as *coolness* is formed by adding the suffix *ness* to *cool*, or in *distrust dis* is prefixed to *trust*. Many of these affixes we know to have been originally separate words, as *dom*, in *freedom*, *kingdóm*, etc., represents the Anglo-Saxon *dóm*, "statute, jurisdiction," and *hood* in *childhood*, *priesthood*, etc., is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *hád*, meaning "person," "quality," or "rank." Our affixes, however, are no longer words by themselves, but carriers of general ideas, which we add to words to modify their meaning. Thus, if we take the old English word *cloud*, we find a verb formed from it, to *becloud*, adjectives in *cloudy*, *clouding*, *clouded*, an adverb in *cloudily*, a substantive in *clouding*, an abstract noun in *cloudiness*, and a diminutive in *cloudlet*. Or

if a word like *critic* is borrowed, and finds a soil favourable to its development, it soon puts forth various parts of speech, an adjective *critical*, an adverb *critically*, substantives abstract and concrete, in *criticalness* and *criticism*, and a verb in *criticize*, which in its turn begets a noun and adjective in *criticizing*, and another agent-noun in *criticizer*.

A full list of the affixes in English will be found in any book of English philology or grammar, with their history and the rules, as far as there are definite rules, for their correct usage. They can be divided into two classes—those of native and those of foreign origin. The most ancient of our derivative words, the small handful from the rich Anglo-Saxon vocabulary which has survived, are all, of course, formed from native affixes, and many of these affixes, *ness*, *less*, *ful*, *ly*, *y*, etc., are still in living use. But when in the XIIIth Century a large number of French words were borrowed, a great many of these brought with them their derivatives, formed on French or Latin models, and, as Mr. Bradley says, "when such pairs of words as *derive* and *derivation*, *esteem* and *estimation*,

laud and *laudation*, *condemn* and *condemnation*, had found their way into the English vocabulary, it was natural the suffix *ation* should be recognized by English speakers as an allowable means of forming 'nouns of action' out of verbs." In this way a large part of the French machinery of derivation has been naturalized in English—we freely form other nouns in *age* (*porterage*, etc.); in *ment* (*acknowledgment*, *amazement*, *atonement*); in *ery* (*bakery*, *brewery*, etc.). We form adjectives, too, in *al*, *ous*, *ose*, *ese*, *ary*, *able*, etc.; verbs in *fy*, *ate*, *ize*, and *ish*. These French suffixes are for the most part derived from the Latin; *ard*, however, in *coward*, etc., and *esque* in *picturesque*, came into French from a German source; *ade*, in *arcade*, *balustrade*, *crusade*, is from the Spanish or Italian; while *ism*, *ize*, *ic*, and the feminine suffix *ess* are ultimately derived through Latin from the Greek.

It is often maintained by the purists of language that these borrowed affixes should only be used for foreign words, that for our own native words only our native machinery should be employed. Letters continually

appear in the newspapers denouncing this or that new formation as a hybrid, and begging all respectable people to help in casting it out from the language. There is, no doubt, a certain truth in the point of view; and the linguistic sense of all of us would be rightly shocked by such an adjective as *fishic* or *fishous* for *fishy*, or such a noun as *dampment* for *dampness*. But a little examination of the linguistic usage will show that no such rule can be absolutely enforced. Latin borrowed Greek affixes, French borrowed them from German, and freely used them in forming new French words; many of our noblest old English words, as *atonement, amazement, forbearance, fulfilment, goddess*, etc., are formed by adding foreign suffixes to English words; while English suffixes have been freely added to foreign words, as *ful* in *beautiful, grateful, graceful*. And when we wish to form a noun out of French or Latin adjectives ending in *ous*, we generally employ our native *ness* for the purpose, as in *consciousness, covetousness*, etc. The foreign prefix *re* has been completely naturalized, and used again and again with native words, and the modern

anti and *pro* are added to English words with little consideration of their foreign birth, and one of our suffixes, *ical*, is itself a hybrid, combined out of Greek and Latin elements. The established usage of the language, stated in general terms, seems to be that foreign affixes, that have no equivalent in English, are often thoroughly naturalized and used with English words; and that this, too, sometimes happens when the foreign affix is simpler and more convenient than our native one, as the Latin *re* has replaced the old *again*, which we find in the old verb to *again-buy* and other similar words. When, also, borrowed words have become thoroughly naturalized and popular, and they are then treated as if they were natives—*cream*, for instance, comes to us ultimately from the Greek, but it has been so long at home, and seems so like an old English word, that it would be insufferable pedantry to form an adjective like *creamic* from it. So the correct *incertain*, *ingrateful*, *illimited*, have been replaced by the hybrids *uncertain*, *ungrateful*, *unlimited*, and *schemer* has taken the place of the older and more correct *schemist*. On the other hand,

where words are obviously foreign in character, we can note a tendency, which has been at work for the last two or three centuries, to prefer what is called "linguistic harmony"; to choose, among two competing forms, the one which is homogeneous throughout. Thus, in Wyclif's words *unsatiable*, *unglorious*, *undiscreet*, the native *un* has been replaced by the Latin *in; unpossible* is used in the Bible of 1611, but has been changed to *impossible* in later editions; while old hybrids like *frailness*, *gayness*, *scepticalness*, *cruelness* have given way to the more correct, and generally more modern forms, *frailty*, *gaiety*, *scepticism*, *cruelty*. This change has been rightly claimed as an instance of the unconscious exercise of a linguistic instinct by the English people; it has not been brought about by the efforts of learned men, but by the choice of the people at large, and is one of the manifestations of the Genius of the Language, which, in its capricious way, dislikes at times the incongruity in words composed of diverse elements.

This tendency, with the modern and more diffused study of language, has grown stronger in the XIXth Century, and with the exception

of thoroughly naturalized affixes like *al*, *ize*, *ism*, *ist*, etc., new hybrids, unless very convenient and expressive, find it hard to withstand the hostile and often furious abuse and opposition which awaits them. Since, however, such words abound in languages like late Latin and French, on which so much of English is modelled, and since many of our most beautiful old words are hybrids, and there was, indeed, no objection to them in the greatest periods of English, and our great poets and writers like Shakespeare and Milton have freely coined them, it is possible that a wider knowledge of the history of the language will modify this feeling, and they will in the future be judged, not by abstract principles, but each one on its merits.

Another curious thing about these affixes, due to the inscrutable working of the Genius of the Language, is the way in which some of them live and remain productive, while others, for some mysterious reason, fall into disuse and perish. *Th*, for instance, which was so freely employed to form nouns, as in *health*, *wealth*, etc., is no longer employed, though *growth* was formed as late as the time

of Shakespeare; and Horace Walpole's *greenth* or Ruskin's *illth* could never have had the least chance of acceptance. So, too, the prefix *for* (corresponding to the still active German *ver*) which we find in so many old words like *forbid, forgo, forgive, forlorn,* is now, in spite of its great usefulness, quite obsolete; and if we take many of our oldest suffixes such as *dom, ship, some,* etc., we shall find, as we approach more modern times, that they are more and more falling into disuse. Old words can be, and often are revived, but when an affix perishes it seems as if no effort can restore to it its old life. Which, then, of these instruments of verbal machinery are still living? A collection of the most important XIXth Century coinages will show that out of our great wealth of native suffixes but a few are still active, while almost all our good old prefixes have fallen out of use. *Y* is still, of course, used, as in such modern words as *plucky, prosy;* we still form adverbs with *ly,* as *brilliantly, enjoyably,* and adjectives in *less* or *ful* or *ish* or *ing,* as *companionless,* and *tactful,* and *amateurish, exciting, appalling,* etc. The most living of all our native suffixes

is the old *ness* for abstract nouns; *boastfulness*, *blandness*, *absent-mindedness*, are all XIXth Century words, and *ness* has also been freely added to words of Latin origin, as *astuteness*, *saintliness*. This suffix has almost entirely taken the place of *ship*, as *gladness* for *gladship*, *cleanness* for *cleanship;* and *ship*, which has given us such beautiful words in the past as *friendship*, *worship*, *fellowship*, is almost dead now, *chairmanship* being, perhaps, the only current word formed from it in the XIXth Century. *Ness* has also replaced *head* or *hood* in many words, and also *dom;* for the XIXth Century attempts to revive *dom*, as in Carlyle's *duncedom*, *dupedom*, have not, with the exception of *boredom*, met with any permanent or popular success.

The Latin suffixes in English show much more vitality. Probably the most common of them in XIXth Century formations is the use of the suffix *al* for forming adjectives or nouns. *Preferential*, *exceptional*, *medieval*, are, with many others, XIXth Century words; *phenomenal* is a hybrid of Greek and Latin, and the nouns *betrothal* and *betrayal* are compounds of Latin and English. Other adjec-

tives are freely formed with *ous*, as *malarious. hilarious, flirtatious;* with *ive*, as *competitive, introspective;* less frequently with *ary*, as *documentary* and *rudimentary. Ation* and *ment* are the commonest Latin suffixes for forming nouns, as *centralization, mystification, enactment, bewilderment,* and there are many new nouns ending in *ability* as *conceivability, reliability,* etc. The Latin prefix *re* is employed more than ever; *multi*, which was not common till the middle of the XVIIth Century, is much used now; *counter* is also living; *intra* has become popular, *pre* and *non* are much used, and quite recently *pro* as a prefix has sprung into sudden popularity, as in *pro-Boer, pro-Russian,* etc. There is no precedent or analogy in Latin for this use of *pro*, meaning "in favour of"; it seems to have arisen from the phrase *pro and con;* we find it first in *pro-slavery* about 1825, but it was rare until about 1896, since when, however, it has abounded in the newspapers as a useful antithesis to the popular *anti.* The French *age*, as in *breakage, cleavage, acreage;* and *esque*, derived through French from the Teutonic *ish*, and used in such words as *Dan-*

tesque, *Romanesque*, are still living. But by far the most active of our affixes are Greek in origin. The suffixes *ic*, *ism*, *ist*, *istic* and *ize*, and *crat* and *cracy*, are fairly modern additions to the language, and obviously suited to the XIXth Century, with its development of abstract thought, and its gigantic growth of theories, creeds, doctrines, systems. With them also, to differentiate more nicely between various shades of thought, we find, principally in the XIXth Century, a great use is also made of Greek prefixes like *hyper*, *pseudo*, *archi*, *neo*, besides a great number of prefixes used in more strictly scientific terms like *dia*, *meta*, *proto*, etc. Of all these *ism* is the most productive; it came to us through the French, who had adopted it from Latin; and as early as 1300 a few words from the French, like *baptism*, make their appearance in English. By the XVIth Century *ism* became a living element in our language; and since then it has rapidly grown in popularity, until in the XIXth Century more new words were formed from it than from any other affix, and practically all the old English suffixes once used in its place have, with

the exception of *ness*, been swallowed up and superseded by it. It is now used, not only in modern words of Greek origin, like *hypnotism*, and still more in Latin words like *pauperism*, *conservatism*, *commercialism*, but also for words from other sources, as *feudalism*, *Brahminism*, etc. This is also true of agent-nouns in *ist* (as in the XIXth Century *scientist*, *opportunist*, *collectivist*); of adjectives in *ic* (*Byronic*, *idyllic*, etc.), and of verbs in *ize*, as *minimize*, *bowdlerize*, and many others. The XVIIth Century gave us one or two instances of curious hybrid verbs formed with the Latin prefix *de* and the Greek suffix *ize*, as *decanonize*, *decardinalize;* but since the period of the French Revolution gave birth to the verb *demoralize*, words of this formation have become extremely popular in French and English, and our modern vocabulary abounds in verbs like *dechristianize*, *decentralize*, *deodorize*, *demagnetize*, etc.

This short account of the decay of our English methods of word-formation, and the invasion of foreign affixes, which seem, like the foreign weeds in English rivers, to be checking our native growths, can hardly be

very cheerful reading for a lover of the old English language; and he cannot but regret the disappearance of many of those vivid syllables to which we owe in the past so many of our most expressive words. But as elsewhere in modern language, where reason and imagination are at war, imagination must give way to the claims of the intellect. Modern language is for purposes of use, not beauty, and these abstract terms in *ism*, *ist*, and *ize*, dull and dreary and impossible for his purposes as the poet finds them, are yet indispensable for the hard thinking of science, and of social and political theory.

There are other ways of forming new words, not by addition, but by taking away one or more of the syllables or letters of which they are composed. One of these processes is by what is called "back-formations." Sometimes a word has a false appearance of ending with a well-known suffix, and, to those ignorant of its character, seems to imply the existence of an original word from which it has been formed. Thus the old adverb *darkling* seems like an adjective formed on a supposed verb to *darkle*, and from this supposition such

XIVth Centuries. *Bet* and *jump* and *dodge* are not found before the XVIth Century, while the XVIIIth Century saw the appearance of *capsize*, *donkey*, *bore*, and many others. None of these words can be traced with any certainty to words of previous formation. In the XIXth Century *rollicking* and the verb to *loaf* have appeared in England, while *rowdy*, *bogus*, *boom*, and *blizzard* are of equally obscure American formation. The same process has been going on in foreign languages, and many of our words of this class are borrowed from abroad. *Risk* and *brave* and *bronze* seem to be of Italian origin, while *flute*, *frown*, and *gorgeous*, and the XIXth Century *rococo* have apparently arisen on French soil.

These new words were a considerable difficulty to the older philologists, who believed that all new words were descended from ancient roots, formed in times beyond the ken of history, when our ancestors possessed the root-creating faculty—a pure productive energy, which their descendants, it was believed, had long since lost. It is one of the discoveries, however, of more recent philology that this faculty is by no means lost:

that wherever language finds itself in its natural state, new words appear—words which have all the character of fresh-created roots, and which soon take their place side by side with terms of long descent, and are used, like them, for the formation of derivatives and compounds. Although further research may discover the origin of some of these "obscure" words, as they are called, there can be no doubt that most of them are new creations, fresh-minted in the popular imagination.

The simplest of these new words are created by the process called by the awkward name of "onomatopœia," which means literally name-making, but is used to describe the process by which a word is made, imitating in its sound the thing which it is intended to describe. This imitation of natural sounds by human speech can never be an absolute imitation, although some of the cries of birds and animals have almost the character of articulate speech; and in words like *cuckoo* and *miaow* we do approach something like perfect representation. This means of word-making is illustrated by the old story of the foreigner in China, who, sitting down to a covered dish,

inquired "quack-quack"? and was promptly answered by "bow-wow" from his Chinese attendant. But direct imitations of this kind are rare, and for the most part the sounds of nature have to be translated into articulate sounds which do not imitate them, but which suggest them to the mind. Thus the noise of splashing water has been represented by such divers sounds as *bil-bit* and *glut-glut*; the nightingale's song by *bul-bul*, *jug-jug*, and *whit-whit*, and the noise of a gun going off, which we now describe by *bang*, was originally rendered by the word *bounce*. This symbolism of sounds, the suggestive power of various combinations of vowels and consonants, has never been very carefully studied, but certain associations or suggestions may be briefly stated. It is obvious, for instance, that long vowels suggest a slower movement than the shorter vowels, and that vowels which we pronounce by opening the mouth convey the idea of more massive objects; while those which are formed by nearly closing the lips suggest more slight movements or more slender objects. Thus *dong* is deeper in sound than *ding*, *clank* than *clink*, and *chip*

is a slighter action than that described by *chop*. More subtle are the suggestions provided by consonants; thus for some reason there are a number of words beginning with *qu* which express the idea of shaking or trembling, as *quiver*, *quaver*, and *quagmire*. The combination *bl* suggests impetus, and generally the use of the breath, as *blow*, *blast*, *blab*, *blubber*; *fl* impetus with some kind of clumsy movement, as *flounder*, *flop*, *flump*; from the combination *gr* we get words like *grumble*, which express something of the same meaning as *groan*, *grunt*, *grunch*, *grudge*, and the modern word of military origin to *grouse*. From *scr* we get a number of words expressing the sense of loud outcry, as *scream*, *screech*, *screek*, *scrike*. A "stop" consonant like *k* or *p* at the end of words suggests a sound or movement abruptly stopped, as *clip*, *whip*, *snip*, *clap*, *rap*, *slap*, *snap*, *flap*; while *sh* in the same place describes a noise or action that does not end abruptly, but is broken down into a mingled mass of smashing or rustling sounds, as in *dash*, *splash*, *smash*, etc. The comparison of *smack* and *smash*, *clap* and *clash* will show this difference. Words ending

in *mp*, like *bump*, *dump*, *slump*, *thump*, convey the sense of a duller and heavier sound, stopped in silence but more slowly. This suggestive power is due partly to direct imitation of natural sounds, but more to the movements of the vocal organs, and their analogy with the movements we wish to describe; an explosive sound describes an explosive movement, as in *blast* or *blow*, while a sound suddenly stopped suggests a stopped movement, and a prolonged sound a movement that is prolonged also. But probably these analogies are mainly formed by association; a common word established in the language describes a sound or action, and its sound comes to be connected with the thing that it describes. Other words are formed on its model, and finally the expressive power of the sound, suggesting as it does so many other words of similar meaning, becomes a part of the unconscious inheritance of those who use the same form of speech.

Among the older onomatopœias in English may be mentioned, in addition to those already quoted, *hoot* and *chatter;* the XVIIIth Century gave us *fuss* and *flimsy;* and *pom-*

pom, a word which arose in the South African War, is one of the latest additions to the list. It is very rare, indeed, that a word is deliberately and consciously made out of sounds arbitrarily chosen, but this has sometimes been successfully accomplished, as in Spenser's word *blatant* and in *gas*, which was formed by a Dutch chemist in the XVIIth Century. *Laudanum* was perhaps an arbitrary term made by Paracelsus, and *ogre* is found without known antecedents, in the writings of one of the earliest of French fairy-tale writers. Manufacturers and inventors have sometimes, as we all know too well, adopted this method of naming their wares; and to them we owe at least one useful word formed by this process—the word *kodak*, which has been borrowed from English into several foreign languages.

A still more curious class of new words are those in which two or more terms are combined, or, as it were, telescoped into one; this is an old process in language, and verbs like to *don* (do on) or to *doff* (do off) are examples of it in its simplest form. Other words supposed to have been formed by this process are *flurry*, from *flaw* and *hurry; lunch*, from

lump and *hunch;* while *flaunt* is perhaps combined out of *fly*, *flout*, and *vaunt*. Lewis Carroll amused himself by creating words of this kind, and has thus added at least two words to the English language—*chortle*, probably formed by suggestions of *chuckle* and *snort*, and *galumph*, out of *gallop* and *triumphant*. In a large number of our new words, however, it is difficult to define the definite associations or analyze the elements that give them their expressive meaning. They seem to be creations of the most vital faculty in language, the sense of its inherent and natural fitness of the name with the thing. The old words *bluff*, *queer*, and *lounge* are examples of this process, which, in the XVIIIth Century, gave us *cantankerous* and *humbug*, and several other similar words. Sometimes a word possesses a vague, undefined expressiveness, which seems capable of embodying various meanings, and words of this kind have been employed for different purposes before their final use is settled. Thus *conundrum*, which probably originated in Oxford or Cambridge as a piece of jocular dog-Latin, was first the appellation of an odd person, then used by Ben Jonson for

a whim, then for a pun, and finally settled down to its present meaning at the end of the XVIIIth Century. The old word *roly-poly* has acquired in the course of its history the following meanings: a rascal, a game, a dance, a pudding, and finally, a plump infant. The expressive word *blizzard* seems to have floated about the United States in the vague sense of a "poser" until the great winter storm of 1880 claimed it as its own.

When Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, came to recent words of racy character and popular origin, like *coax* and *fun*, he labelled them "low words," and we have inherited from him a somewhat fastidious and scornful feeling about them. And yet a little study of the history of literature will show us that the most admired writers of the past took a very different attitude towards popular creations of this kind, and that words like *rowdy*, *bogus*, *boom*, and *rollicking*, at which we boggle, would have had no terrors for the greatest of our old poets. Spenser and Shakespeare, for instance, adopted at once the then recent and probably Irish expression *hubbub*. The onomatopœic *bump* and the dialect *dwindle*

make their first appearance in Shakespeare's plays; and he often uses the word *hurry*, which, save for one doubtful instance, was not known before his time. Other words of a similar character—*bang* and *bluster*, *flare* and *freak*, *huddle* and *bustle*—were all apparently of XVIth Century origin, and all appear in the writings of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton. The first known instance of *gibber* is in Horatio's lines—

"The sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets,"

and Hamlet, when he thought of killing his uncle, was not too fastidious to say—

"Now I might do it *pat*, now he is praying."

The true function of the poet is not to oppose the forces that make for life and vividness in language, but to sift the new expressions as they arise, and ennoble, in Shakespeare's fashion, those that are worthy of it, by his usage.

CHAPTER V[1]

MAKERS OF ENGLISH WORDS

EVERY time a new word is added to the language, either by borrowing, composition, or derivation, it is due, of course, to the action, conscious or unconscious, of some one person. Words do not grow out of the soil, or fall on us from heaven; they are made by individuals; and it would be extremely interesting if we could always find out who it was who made them. But, of course, for the great majority of new words, even those created in the present day, such knowledge is unattainable. They are first, perhaps, suggested in conversation, when the speaker probably does not know that he is making a new word; but the fancy of the hearers is struck, they spread the new expression till it becomes fashionable; and if it corresponds to some real need, and

[1] A portion of this chapter was published in the *English Review* of August 1911, and is here reproduced by kind permission of the editor.

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and he also formed anew *aloofness*, although it had been used at least once before his time. *Cyclone* was the deliberate creation in 1848 of a meteorologist who wished for a word to describe the phenomenon of circular or whirling winds, and *anti-cyclone* was suggested about twenty years later by Sir Francis Galton. *Constituency* was an invention of Macaulay's, for which he apologized; *scientist* was deliberately made by Whewell, as there was no common word till then to describe students of different kinds of science. Other XIXth Century words which we know to have been deliberately created are *Eurasian*, *exogamy*, *folklore*, *hypnotism*, *telegraph*, *telephone*, *photograph*, besides a whole host of more strictly scientific terms.

But most words never possessed, or have soon lost, their birth-certificates; and it would seem at first sight impossible to discover how they arose. Since, however, the publication was begun of the *Oxford Dictionary*, whose army of over a thousand readers has carefully searched, for many years, the records of the language, and has traced, as far as is humanly possible, each new

word to its first appearance, a great body of new information has been made available for the student. Any one who will make from this work a collection of modern words and note their origin, cannot help being struck by the fact that many of our most expressive and beautiful words are first found in the writings of certain men of genius, and bear every sign of being their own creations. Of course we can never know for a certainty, unless he distinctly states it, that a writer has created the new word which is found for the first time in his writings. He may have derived it from some undiscovered source, or he may have heard it in conversation; all we can know is that the word was introduced, and became current at about the time that it makes its first appearance in his work. On the other hand, if we find among a number of contemporary writers in whose works few or no new words are found, one to whom hundreds of new formations are traced; if these are learned words, not likely to be used in conversation; if no earlier trace of them has been discovered, and if, moreover, they are the sort of words we should expect

this writer to create—if they seem to bear, like the coinage of a king, the stamp of his personality impressed on them,—then surely there is at least a strong presumption in favour of the belief that he created or first borrowed them himself. Let us, for example, take the instance of Sir Thomas Browne. In 1646 he published that odd and interesting book, the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, and although his other works are not lacking in new formations, this book contains them by the hundred, and has probably given currency to more words in the English language than any one book since the time of Chaucer. And these words are almost all just the words that we would expect him to create—long, many-syllabled words derived from the Latin, and are often expressive of his own musing and meditative mind—*hallucination*, *insecurity*, *retrogression*, *precarious*, *incontrovertible*, *incantatory*, *antediluvian*—the complete list would fill a page or more of this book, and would be a sufficient proof that a writer like Browne makes for himself a large part of his own vocabulary. And it is a proof, moreover, of his genius for word-making that many of these new crea-

tions—words like *medical, literary, electricity* —have become quite indispensable in modern speech.

Many new words are found also in Milton's writings (the greater number of them in *Paradise Lost*), words like *dimensionless, infinitude, emblazonry, liturgical, ensanguined, anarch, gloom, irradiance, Pandemonium, bannered, echoing, rumoured, impassive, moonstruck, Satanic.* These words, too, bear the stamp of his coining, and proclaim themselves the offspring of his genius.

In Shakespeare's plays, partly owing to their immense popularity, but quite as much to his unequalled sense for language, more new words are found than in almost all the rest of the English poets put together; for not only is our speech full of phrases from his plays, but a very large number of our most expressive words are first found in them. And in Shakespeare we find that rarest and most marvellous kind of word-making, when in the glow and fire of inspiration, some poet, to express his thought, will venture on a great audacity of language, and invent some undreamed-of word, as when Macbeth cries—

"No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine";

where *multitudinous* and *incarnardine* (as a verb) are new words; or where Romeo speaks of the "yoke of *inauspicious* stars," or Prospero of "*cloud-cap't* towers" and "the *baseless* fabric of this vision."

Of the new words in Chaucer and Wyclif we have already spoken; a large number of new terms are first found in the works of their contemporaries Gower and Langland, and in those of Lydgate and Caxton in the XVth Century; and Caxton in especial seems to have introduced a large number of words from standard or Parisian French. The new words, indeed, found in these earlier authors are almost all borrowings from foreign languages; and it was hardly before the XVIth Century that English writers began to form compounds freely. But in the works and translations of Coverdale and Tindale, we find a number of new compounds: *loving-kindness, blood-guiltiness, noonday, morning-star, kind-hearted,* in Coverdale; *long-suffering, broken-hearted* and many others

in Tindale. *Scapegoat* was a mistranslation of Tindale's—one of those happy errors which have added so many useful and expressive words to the English Language. In the Revised Version of 1611 we do not find many new words; but the effect of this version in preserving old-fashioned terms from extinction has of course been very great.

With Spenser we reach the period of self-conscious care for the English language. While previous writers have been content to write in the English of their time, only occasionally borrowing or forming new words when they needed them, Spenser deliberately formed for himself a kind of artificial language, made up partly of old forms, partly of dialect expressions, and partly of his own inventions. We find in him for the first time a process to which the English language owes much of the present richness; the deliberate revival of old-fashioned and obsolete words; and even many of his new formations like *drowsihead, idlesse, dreariment, elfin, foolhappy*, have often an archaic character. Like most men of letters who revive old words, he frequently made mistakes about their form or

meaning; *derring-do* is not a noun but a verbal phrase in Chaucer and Lydgate, whence he took it; and *chevisance*, which he used for "enterprise," was really a word meaning shiftiness; and he employed the archaic verb *hight* in a number of senses very different from its true meaning.

With the Elizabethan writers and dramatists, like Nashe, Greene, and Chapman, we come on yet another class of innovators, whom we may call eccentric word-makers. These writers seem to love innovation for its own sake, and to invent new words, not because they are well formed or necessary, but simply for the sake of novelty and oddness. Their works provide immense lists of words which are only used by their own creators, and have never found general acceptance. The XVIIth Century abounds in writers of this kind, whose poems and prose-writings are full of strange formations. But even these eccentrics performed a certain service to the language, for by continually experimenting, they would sometimes form in English or adopt from Greek or Latin a word that deserved to live: thus *dramatist* and *fatalism* are first found in

Cudworth, and in the enormous list of strange formations traced to Henry More are a number of current words like *central*, *circuitous*, *decorous*, *freakish*, and *fortuitous*.

Even more fortunate were two secular writers of this period, Evelyn and Robert Boyle. Evelyn felt, as he states in his Diary, the need for the importation of foreign words; and of the large number, found for the first time in his writings, many were no doubt first naturalized by him. They belong, for the most part, to the vocabulary of art, or are descriptive of the ornaments of life: *outline*, *attitude*, *contour*, *pastel*, *monochrome*, *balustrade*, *cascade*, *opera*.

The new words found in Boyle's writings are, of course, of a different character, being for the most part scientific terms, such as *pendulum*, *intensity*, *pathological*, *corpuscle*, *essence* in the sense of extract, and *fluid* as a noun.

Dryden's works contribute many new words; a large number of French phrases were imported by the Restoration dramatists, and with the reign of Queen Anne came a new enrichment of the language. Pope's list of new words is the longest in the time of the

early Georges; and Dr. Johnson, in spite of his declaration that he had rarely used a word without the authority of a previous writer, would seem, if we are to judge by the *Oxford Dictionary*, to have added a considerable number of learned words to the language. Among these may be mentioned *irascibility*, and the modern meanings of words like *acrimonious*, *literature*, and *comic*. When we find words like these, with the exclamation *fiddle-dedee*, traced by the Dictionary to Dr. Johnson; *etiquette*, *friseur*, *picnic*, and *persiflage* to Lord Chesterfield; *bored* and *blasé* to Byron, *propriety* in its modern use to the eminently proper Miss Burney, and *idealism* in its non-philosophical sense to Shelley, it begins to seem as if authors had a tendency to invent or import, or at least to use first in print, words descriptive of their own characteristics.

Of other XVIIIth Century writers, Fielding, Sterne, and Gibbon were not word-creators; but Burke seems to have possessed this faculty, and it is to him, apparently, that we owe a considerable part of our political vocabulary—words like *colonial*, *coloniza-*

tion, diplomacy, federalism, electioneering, expenditure, financial, municipality, and our modern use of *organization, representation,* and *resources.*

The rise, at the end of the XVIIIth Century, of the Romantic Movement made a demand for words not needed in the previous century. This took for the most part the form of the revival of old and obsolete words, like *chivalrous,* which Dr. Johnson had described in his Dictionary as out of use. Sir Walter Scott was the greatest of these word-revivers, and when we meet with fine old swash-bucklers' words like *raid, foray,* and *onslaught,* they are very likely to come out of his poems, or the Waverley Novels. *Fitful,* which had once been used by Shakespeare, in the phrase "after life's fitful fever," he also revived, and *bluff* and *lodestar; gruesome* he introduced from the Scotch, and the romantic word *glamour,* which is derived from *grammerye* (another of his revivals), and meant, in the Middle Ages, grammar-learning, the study of Latin, and thus in ignorant minds soon acquired, like *philosophy,* a magical meaning.

Both Coleridge and Southey were great experimenters in language, and both almost equalled the XVIIth Century divines in their old, learned, and outlandish formations. But among Coleridge's strange words we find *pessimism*, *phenomenal*, and *Elizabethan*, and many others have become popular and current.

Wordsworth and Shelley have not contributed much to our modern vocabulary, but Keats, who in his love of unusual words showed often more enthusiasm than taste, was nevertheless a genuine word-maker. It is true that of the many old words he revived, few or none have become popular, and some of his own inventions, like *aurorean* and *beamily*, are not happy creations. But the poet who could find such expressions as winter's "pale *misfeature*," "*globed* pæonies," and linen "smooth and *lavendered*," must plainly have had a genius for word-creation, aud would have done much, had he lived, to enrich the English language. And Keats, like Milton and Shakespeare, possessed that rare gift of the great poet, the power of creating those beautiful compound epithets which

are miniature poems in themselves, *deep-damasked*, for instance, and *dew-dabbled*, and the nightingale's *full-throated* ease.

After Keats the faculty of word-creation shows a remarkable decline, and with the exception of Carlyle, the harvest of new words from the works of the other XIXth Century authors is a poor and scanty one. Tennyson's compound epithets, like *evil-starred*, *green-glimmering*, and *fire-crowned*, are sometimes beautiful, and we owe to him apparently *Horatian*, *moonlit*, and *fairy tales*. But Tennyson cannot be claimed as a great word-creator; and still less can be said for Browning, whose odd formations like *crumblement*, *febricity*, *darlingness*, *artistry*, *garnishry*, can hardly be considered valuable additions to the language.

In Carlyle, however, the Victorian era possessed one great word-creator, one who could treat language with the audacity of the old writers, and could, like them, fuse his temperament into a noun or adjective, and stamp it with his image. *Croakery*, *gigmanity*, *Bedlamism*, *grumbly*, *dandiacal*—would any one but Carlyle have invented words like

these? He had a genius for nicknames, his *pig-philosophy* and *dismal science* are still remembered, and his eccentricities and audacities would fill many pages. But his contributions were not all of this personal character; like Sir Walter Scott, he introduced words like *feckless*, *lilt*, and *outcome* into England out of Scotland; and a number of current words like *environment* and *decadent* are traced to his writings.

When we come to living authors, one searches the dictionary in vain for any serious contributions to our vocabulary from their works. Although at least twenty new words are added to our current speech every year, and although in countries like France or Germany, authors and men of letters make at least an attempt to provide their age with expressive terms for their new experiences, in England writers seem to be somewhat unduly conservative, and to leave this task to others, to the newspapers, or to chance. At the present day our only deliberate word-makers are the men of science, and the popular interest in their discoveries and inventions tends to give great currency to

their new formations. As, moreover, in this age of newspapers we make the acquaintance of our new words by reading, and not as of old, through speech, these new formations do not undergo the processes of transformation and assimilation by which words were naturalized in the past, but keep their clear-cut and alien forms, and so tend to produce a learned scientific jargon, which is not, as of old, gradually translated into English by popular speech, but tends, on the contrary, to extend itself over our old English, and cripple or destroy the methods and machinery of the ancient language. This, from the point of view of literary or idiomatic English, cannot but be regarded as a misfortune, although an inevitable one, for which as long as the present state of things continues, no remedy can be suggested. For there can be no doubt that science is in many ways the natural enemy of language. Language, either literary or colloquial, demands a rich store of living and vivid words—words that are "thought-pictures," and appeal to the senses, and also embody our feelings about the objects they *describe*. But science cares nothing about

emotion or vivid presentation; her ideal is a kind of algebraic notation, to be used simply as an instrument of analysis; and for this she rightly prefers dry and abstract terms, taken from some dead language, and deprived of all life and personality.

However, if these and other dangers seem to threaten the English language, we must remember that it has passed through greater dangers, and suffered from far worse misfortunes in the past. It has been mutilated as hardly any other language has been mutilated, but these mutilations have made place for wonderful new growths; its vocabulary has been almost destroyed, but new and better words have been found to make good these losses; foreign influences, French and Latin, have threatened its existence, but it has in the end conquered its conquerors, and enriched itself with their spoils; and we may rest confident that as long as the English nation remains vigorous in thought and feeling, it will somehow forge for itself a medium of expression worthy of itself, and of the great past from which it has inherited so much.

CHAPTER VI

LANGUAGE AND HISTORY—THE EARLIEST PERIOD

We have hitherto treated the subject of the English language more in its formal aspect, without much regard to the thought of which it is the expression, and which fashions it for its instrument. The last, however, is the most interesting, and certainly the most important, aspect of the subject; but, save for the earliest period of our race-history, it has not yet occupied the attention of many scholars. The study of "Semantics," as it is called, the science of meaning, the development of life and thought as embodied in language, is yet in its infancy; and indeed, until the partial completion of the great *Oxford Dictionary*, in which every word is traced as carefully as possible to its origin, and all its changes of meaning registered in their chronological order, no such study could have been usefully undertaken in regard at least to the later periods of English history.

Every sentence, every collection of words we use in speech or writing, contains, if we examine its component parts, a strange medley of words, old or modern, native or foreign, and drawn from many sources. But each possesses its ascertainable history, and many of them bear important traces of the event or movement of thought to which they owe their birth. If, therefore, we analyze our vocabulary into its different periods, separating our earliest words from the later additions, we shall find the past of the English race and civilization embodied in its vocabulary, in much the same way as the history of the earth is found embodied in the successive strata of geological formation. For it is not too much to say that a contradiction between language and history rarely or never occurs. When a new product, a new conception, a new way of feeling, comes into the thought of a people, it inevitably finds a name in their language—a name that very generally bears on it the mark of the source from which it has been derived.

Let us, then, take our modern English civilization in a few at least of its broadest

and simplest aspects, and attempt, by means of language, to study its elements and proximate sources, and the periods when they were accepted into the consciousness of the race.

By far the oldest deposit in the English language is a little group of words inherited from the ancient Aryan language, which was spoken when our ancestors, and those of the Greeks, the Romans, the Slavs, the Persians, and Hindoos all dwelt together in some unknown place, at some remote date, far in the prehistoric past. Although the belief in a homogeneous Aryan race is now generally abandoned, the evidence of language shows a continuity, if not of race, at least of culture; and these wrecks and fragments of speech, preserved by some happy accident, are by far the oldest documents we possess concerning our civilization. We have little or no historical knowledge of any of the Aryan peoples before about 1000 B.C.; beyond that period, to the time of the primitive Aryans, there stretches a gap, probably of many thousands of years, which we can only cross on this frail *bridge* of words. The earliest pioneers in

the study of language, followed this track into the unknown past with more enthusiasm than caution, and created for themselves out of a few old and battered words the picture of a beautiful golden age, a kind of terrestrial paradise, which they located in the centre of Asia, where, five or six thousand years ago, they believed that the ancestors of the Aryan races dwelt together in pastoral and poetic simplicity and plenty. Recent criticism, however, has destroyed much of that beautiful picture; and it is not now believed that the evidence of language is sufficient to enable us to reconstruct, save in the barest outline, the conditions of this early culture. Even the Asiatic home of the Aryans is no longer generally believed in; and the most widely accepted of current views is probably that which places their home in the southern steppes of Russia, whence, at their separation, the Indian and Persian branch wandered towards the East, the Slavs and Teutons into the German forests, and the Greeks towards Greece; while the ancestors of the Celts and Romans followed the course of the Danube towards Italy and Gaul.

It would be beyond our scope, however, to treat of this whole subject of the Indo-European languages and the primitive Aryan civilization; we must confine ourselves to the words existing in our English vocabulary which have been derived from that language, and which are evidence of the earliest known stage in the culture of our race. For we find in this primitive deposit of language, not only the original forms of words like *knee*, *foot*, and *tooth*, and terms for our simplest acts and perceptions, but others more indicative of a definite state of civilization. The numerals up to ten descend to us from this period; the words *father*, *mother*, *daughter*, *sister*, *brother*, *son*, *widow* and our old word *neve* (now replaced by the French *nephew*) show that family relationships had been considerably developed. *Hound* is an Aryan word, and with *goat*, *goose*, *sow*, and a word for horse, *eoh*, which we once possessed, but which has long since perished in our language, have been taken as a proof that these animals had been more or less domesticated. But the most important of these names of domesticated animals are connected with the flocks and

herds of pastoral life, and seem to show that cows and sheep were the main property and means of subsistence for this ancient people. *Ewe*, *wether*, and *wool*, *cow*, *ox*, *steer*, *herd*, have been traced back to the early Aryans, and another word *fee*, which in Old English and other Teutonic tongues meant both cattle and money, and which is related to the Latin *pecu*, from which *pecuniary* descends. Indeed, the accumulated evidence of language proves almost beyond a doubt that the Aryans were a nomadic race, similar in habits to the modern Tartars, driving their herds of cattle with them on their wanderings, dependent for the most part on their meat and milk for food, and on their skins for clothing. The words *wheel*, *nave*, *axle*, *yoke*, and a root from which our *wain* and *wagon* descend, are regarded as a proof that wheels had been invented, and that the Aryans travelled in carts drawn by cattle. They possessed only one word for any kind of metal (our word *ore* descends from it) and this is taken to stand for copper, which is often found in a form easily hammered into use by primitive peoples. No Aryan words for sea or fish have

come down to us; but our verb to *row*, and our word *rudder* (which originally meant a paddle) seem to show that the original race had learned some primitive forms of river navigation, probably in a canoe, dug out from the trunk of a tree, like the canoes of other primitive people. *Door* is a very ancient word; *timber* is derived from an Aryan root; and *thatch* comes from an old verb meaning "to cover." These words are regarded as a proof that the Aryans, like their Germanic descendants in the time of Tacitus, had begun to build some kind of wooden or wicker huts for themselves, without, however, windows, for which no term, common to the related languages, is found. Our word *mead* is found in many Aryan languages, and shows that this primitive people possessed a drink made from honey. The verb to *weave* is of equal antiquity and seems to show that some art of making cloth, or at least of plaiting, had been early acquired. Words showing a knowledge of agriculture are few and of doubtful meaning, and form a strong contrast to the terms connected with flocks and herds and wagons. The word *tree*, the names of *birch* and *withy*

are widely distributed; the words *wolf*, the *hare*, the *beaver*, the *otter*, the *mouse*, *feather*, *nest*, are of great antiquity, and *night* and *star*, *dew* and *snow*, *wind* and *thunder*, *fire* and *east*, are primitive terms, or ones that descend from early roots.

The greater part of the words which have come to us from this early period are of a homely and some even of a coarse character, and we are not accustomed to feel any specially romantic interest in them. And yet they are of importance as forming the first deposit of human experience in our race of which we have any knowledge; the nucleus of life around which our present civilization has slowly grown. From them we can make for ourselves a dim picture of our primitive ancestors, dwelling in wattled huts, or loading their goods and chattels on their wooden ox-carts, and driving their herds of cattle and flocks of sheep as they wandered out to seek new pasture-lands, and new temporary habitations.

And when we consider that a large part of these words are still spoken, not only almost all over Europe, but in some of the remote

languages of the East, we can find in them a bond which makes, if not the whole, at least a great part of the world kin, and joins our English civilization with those of Persia and India. When, too, we remember the unknown antiquity of these words, we come to associate them with the other remains of an unknown past that we still carry with us—old rites which are still practised, superstitions which still haunt our minds, and the antique agricultural implements, the wheels and ploughshares and shepherds' crooks, which we still see in use about us. The XIXth Century, which has added to modern life many material conveniences, has also enriched it with at least one new way of feeling, one new intellectual pleasure—the projection of our thoughts and sympathies through thousands of years into the primitive past, beyond all dates and records. Our modern knowledge of the antiquity of our Aryan words does much to open for us these vistas and vast avenues of time; and terms like *mother*, *father*, *brother*, *sister*, *night* and *star* and *wind* are all the more beautiful and dear to us, because we know *that they belong* to the innermost core of our

race-experience, and are living sounds, conveyed to us by the uninterrupted speech of countless generations out of the silence and darkness that lie far beyond the dawn of history.

The next step in the history of our primitive civilization is one that we also learn of from the history of language. After an unknown period the Asiatic group, the peoples from whose speech those of the Persians and Indians are derived, split off from the original Aryans; and we find the European races still dwelling together, and acquiring in common terms that betoken a certain advance in civilization. There is reason for believing that this European branch had made their way from treeless steppes and pasture-lands into a country of forests; for we find that in this West-Aryan or European period, when the ancestors of the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, and Teutons were still closely connected, a number of words for trees and birds make their first appearance. Our words *beech*, *hazel*, *elm*, *sallow*, *throstle*, *starling*, and *finch* have been traced with more or less certainty to this period, and we also find a number of

agricultural terms are common to two or more of the West-Aryan peoples—*corn* and *furrow*, *bean* and *meal*, an *ear* of corn, the verb to *mow*, and the old word for ploughing, to *ear*, which is now obsolete save in certain English dialects, although it is used in the Revised Version of the Bible. This increase of agricultural terms is believed to be additional evidence of the migration, at this time, from a treeless to a wooded country; for nomadic peoples despise agriculture, and only the pressure of necessity will make them abandon for it their pastoral life. It was probably, therefore, when our ancestors found themselves in the dense primeval forests of Europe, with their scanty pasture-lands and stagnant streams and wide marshes, that they were forced to supplement the easy life of shepherds and cattle-breeders by the much more laborious occupations of agriculture. If we are to believe the evidence of language, it is at this period, too, that our ancestors became acquainted with the sea, for which the Asiatic and European languages had no common word. Our word *mere*, which is still used in poetry and which forms the first part of the

word *mermaid*, corresponds to the Latin *mare*, from which we derive our borrowed word *marine;* and *salt* and *fish* are terms common to the European group.

At what period this early group of European tribes separated from each other we have no knowledge; but it was long before the earliest records of European history that our ancestors made their way into the German forests, while the ancestors of the Greeks and Romans moved towards the shores of the Mediterranean. There are strong linguistic grounds for believing that the ancestors of the Celts and Latins travelled for a while together, and those of the Slavs and Teutons, while the Greeks formed a group of their own; for the Celtic languages are believed to be more nearly related to Latin than Latin is to Greek, and the Slav and Teutonic speeches have certain elements in common. But the next important stage in the history of our race is that marked by the group of languages called Teutonic, to which High and Low German, English, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish belong. This third and Teutonic stratum of our civilization, following on the scanty

but one term for metals, which they used to designate copper, the only metal that they knew. But the Teutonic tribes, before our Anglo-Saxon ancestors separated from them, had acquired words for *gold* and *silver*, *lead*, *tin*, *iron*, and *steel*, and the sinister and magical character of blacksmiths in old German legends is a proof of the wonder with which the new art of forging was regarded. Other words that show a great advance in civilization are *leech*, a healer, and *lore*, and also *book* and *write*—words which have acquired new meanings in the course of time, but which date from this Teutonic period, when, as we know from other sources, the rudiments of the art of writing had been acquired. *Book* (which is thought to be derived from *beech*) originally signified a writing-tablet, probably of wood, and *write* (which is related to the German word *reissen*, to tear) meant to cut letters in bark or wood.

If we examine the commonly accepted etymologies of others of these Teutonic words, we can get some little glimpses into the ways of our far-off Teutonic ancestors. We note, first of all, a group of words that seem to have

grown out of the experience of those wanderings which were so important a part of primitive life. *Fear*, for instance, is believed to be derived from the same Aryan root as *fare*, and could therefore suggest the dangers of travel in the early forests; *learn* has been traced to an early root meaning to "follow a track," and *weary* to a verb meaning "to tramp over wet grounds and moors." There are other words that take us back to bygone ways of life—our verb to *earn*, for instance, is derived from an old word meaning "field-labour," and is cognate with the German *Ernte*, harvest; *gain*, although it has come to us from French, is descended from a Teutonic verb meaning "to graze, to pasture," and also "to forage, to hunt or fish." *Free* comes from an Aryan root meaning "dear" (whence also our word *friend*), and meant, in old Teutonic times, those who are "dear" to the head of the household—that is, connected with him by ties of kinship, and not slaves or in bondage. Our important religious word, *bless*, carries us far back into the pagan and prehistoric past; *bless* is derived from *blood*, and its original meaning, which was "to mark

or consecrate with blood," is evidence of the ritual use of blood, which is so common among primitive peoples. Our word *mirth* has been given a curiously psychological derivation, for it is traced, with its related adjective *merry*, to a word meaning "short," and is supposed to designate "that which shortens time, or cheers.

We must, however, in all these old words, especially those describing thoughts and feelings, beware of the anachronism of reading into them their modern meanings. Thus *fear* had the objective sense of a sudden or terrible event till after the Norman Conquest; the early meaning of *mirth* was "enjoyment, happiness," and could be used in Old English of religious joy; while *merry* meant no more than "agreeable, pleasing." Heaven and Jerusalem were described by old poets as "merry" places; and the word had originally no more than this signification in the phrase "merry England," into which we read a more modern interpretation.

The progress of civilization has been well compared to the course of a river having many sources, some undiscovered; and for

historians of culture those points at which a broad tributary joins the main stream have, of course, an especial interest. We have now traced our ancestors from their original and unknown home, to the coasts and forests of Germany, where, at the period at which we now arrive, they were still savages, in spite of their notable advances in the arts of life, and still dwelt in rude huts or underground excavations, or migrated, as of old, on their ox-carts. They had doubtless borrowed from neighbouring tribes many of their new arts, and learnt from them the use of new products. There are scholars who hold that the knowledge of iron came, with its name, from some Celtic race; and that the word *silver* was derived from Salube, a town on the Black Sea, mentioned in the *Iliad* as the original home of silver. The words *rat* and *ape* are also believed to be very early borrowings, but their sources have not been discovered; and it is difficult or impossible to trace, in the dark night of prehistoric time, the influences, the contacts with neighbouring peoples, from which these new products and the names of these new animals were derived.

But we are now approaching one of the great meeting-places of history, when our ancestors were about to come in contact with races, and fall under the spell of influences, which were to transform their life in a marvellous manner, and to create, out of ignorance and savagery, our modern world of culture. When the primitive European group of the Aryans was broken up, and our Teutonic ancestors lost themselves for hundreds or thousands of years in the deep forests of Germany, their related tribes, from whom the Greeks and Romans were descended, made their way more or less directly to the Mediterranean; and on these propitious shores, the birthplace of modern thought and life, they came in contact with the ancient civilization of Egypt and the East. They learnt the arts of building in stone, of mining and navigation; they took from the East the beginnings of art, of writing, of mathematics, and built up the wonderful edifice of classical civilization which, first led by Greece, and then by Rome, settled the main elements and outlines of human culture. The light shines very clearly on this page of ancient history, when the

highest forms of thought and life were developed in the great centres of Athens and Rome, and spread their luminous influence over wider and wider areas; the darkness in which, on the other side of the Alps, our ancestors were involved, seems pitchy black by comparison, and it would be beyond our task to describe how, little by little, that darkness was partially dispelled. All we can do is to trace, by certain words early borrowed by the Northern barbarians from the polished nations of the South, some gleams of light that penetrated northward in this early period, before the tribes of the Angles and Saxons invaded England. These gleams are faint and uncertain, and there is considerable doubt about many of our earliest borrowings. Taking them, however, for what they are, we may gain a little hypothetical knowledge, at least, concerning this early period. To try, moreover, to arrange the words chronologically is also highly precarious, as there is always the possibility that a word which appears in several cognate languages did not belong to the original stock before their separation, but has spread from one to the other of the tribes since that date.

Following, however, the opinion of the best authorities, we may take the word *Cæsar*, the title of the Roman Emperor, as probably the earliest Latin word adopted into the Teutonic speech. This word, however, in the form in which they borrowed it, has become obsolete in English, and has come to us again from Latin. Other early terms which show some contact with the forces of Rome are of a military character—*pile* and *camp* and *drake* (an old word for dragon), which was borrowed probably to describe the dragon-banners of the Roman cohorts. *Drake* still lives in the compound *fire-drake; pile* has since lost its original meaning of "a heavy javelin," such as the Roman soldiers carried; and *camp* no longer signifies for us battle, or field of battle, and, indeed, only survives in the name of "camp-ball," or, in the dialect phrase of provincial athletics, "to camp the bar"—our modern "camp" being a much later borrowing from the French. *Street* (from *strata via*, a paved way) and *mile* and *wall* and *toll*, are also believed to be early borrowings, showing that our ancestors were familiar with the roads, fortified camps and regula-

tions of the Roman Empire. Perhaps even earlier than these are *cat*, *mule*, and *ass;* and a group of words which remain as a testimony of the visits of wandering traders from the South—*chest* and *ark* (which meant originally a box or chest); *pound*, as a measure of weight; *inch;* and *seam*, an old word for the load of a pack-horse, which still survives in various technical uses. *Monger*, in *ironmonger* or *fishmonger*, comes to us from a borrowing of *mango*, a Latin name for a trader; *copper* was perhaps taken from his copper coins, and the word *mint* (which kept the meaning of money till the XVIth Century) was also borrowed, being derived, like the later *money*, from the name of the goddess Moneta, in whose temple at Rome money was coined. Among the names for the foreign products brought by these early traders we find *wine*, and an old word *ele*, for oil. *Pepper* is an early borrowing; it has been traced back to India, and is among the first of those ancient, far-travelled words that have come into the English from remote sources in the Orient—words like the later *ginger*, *silk*, and *orange*, redolent of deserts and caravans, far

mountains, and Eastern seas. These early words give us a dim picture of Roman traders, travelling with their mules and asses along the paved roads of the German provinces, their chests and boxes and wine-sacks, and their profitable bargains with our primitive ancestors.

Civilization begins, however, not so much by the importation of foreign products (which can be found in the most savage communities) as by the imitation of foreign arts and technical processes. We possess in English a small group of words which show that our ancestors had begun to take this step before they left the Continent. *Chalk*, in the sense of lime, has been taken as a proof that they learnt the art of building with mortar from the Romans; and they also borrowed the word *pit*, which seems to have meant, in early times, a well or spring built round with masonry. *Table* and *pillow* speak for themselves; *mill* is an important borrowing, and the word *kitchen*, *kettle*, *dish*, point to a revolution in cooking arrangements. *Cheese*, and perhaps *butter*, may be regarded as words whose adoption signifies, not the appearance of new ob-

jects, but of new and improved methods of producing them. Other words that show an advance in civilization are connected with agriculture, and especially with the cultivation of fruit-trees. *Apple* is probably a very early borrowing, but its origin is unknown, although some have traced it to the town of Abella in Campania, famous in antiquity for its apples. Better established borrowings are *pear*, *cherry*, and *plum*, the two latter being ultimately derived from Greek. Our words *imp* and *plant* are believed to be early adoptions, and to show that the art of grafting fruit-trees was acquired at this time, for the original meaning of both these words was that of a shoot or slip used in grafting. The German language has preserved some Latin words, proving that the culture of the vine was established at an early date in the German provinces, and *poppy* and *mint* are prehistoric borrowings of the names of plants. *Anchor* seems to be the only sea-term they took from the Latin, for, as we have seen, they had a developed sea-vocabulary of their own.

Although before the IIIrd Century of the Christian era the Rhine lands had become a

centre of Roman civilization, with Roman roads, fortresses, stone-built houses and marble temples, the above list of words will show that the German tribes borrowed from these rich storehouses of culture only such things as their barbarian minds could appreciate—not ideas, but homely instruments, useful plants, and methods of production. But there are a few very interesting words which made their way into the language at this early date, and which show the beginning of the influence of ideas, and the dawning of that great world of thought and feeling, the Christian religion, which was destined to absorb and transform the primitive culture of these Teutonic tribes. The most important of these terms is the word *church*, which is in itself an historical document of great interest. While most of the other languages of Europe received from Latin Christianity the word *ecclesia* for church (as we see in the French *église*, the Italian *chiesa*), *church* (the Anglo-Saxon *cirice, circe*) is believed to be derived ultimately from the Greek *kuriakon*, meaning "the Lord's House," a name not uncommon for sacred buildings in the provinces of

Eastern Christianity. This Greek word was probably learnt by the German mercenaries in the Eastern provinces, serving, as so many served, in the Roman armies, or by the Goths who invaded lands where Greek was spoken. From the IVth Century onward Christian churches, with their sacred vessels and ornaments, were well-known objects of pillage to the German invaders of the Empire, and the pagan Angles and Saxons borrowed this Greek name for the churches they sacked, centuries before they entered them as believers.

Angel, and less certainly *Devil*, are words of Christianity which were perhaps directly borrowed from the Greek: the names of supernatural spirits pass easily from tribe to tribe, and these words perhaps reached our ancestors in this way. It is not for more than a thousand years that we find again any direct borrowing from Greek into English, and then the words are taken from books by enlightened scholars of the Renaissance, not whispered from ear to ear by superstitious barbarians.

The Christian Church was divided at this time by the great Aryan heresy, and these

Greek words came to our ancestors from the heterodox East. But they were also affected by a second stream of influence from the orthodox Church of the West, which reached them through the Christians of Gaul and Germany; and from these, before they came to England, our ancestors are believed to have borrowed the words *alms*, *bishop*, *monk*, and *minster* (the name for a monastery or a monastic church), and also the word *pine*, from which our verb to *pine* descends, and which, being derived from the Latin *poena*, was used in the early Church to describe the pains of hell. It was with these dim and vague notions in their heads that they embarked in their warlike boats to cross the sea to England.

CHAPTER VII

LANGUAGE AND HISTORY—THE DARK AND THE MIDDLE AGES

WE have, in the previous chapter, traced the evidence, embedded in the English language, of the culture of our ancestors, and

their progress in civilization up to the time when they left the Continent to settle in their English homes. From the Roman civilization of Britain, which they destroyed, and from its Celtic inhabitants, whom they massacred or enslaved, they received, if we are to believe what language tells us, practically nothing. The Latin word *castra*, which survives in the name of Chester, and the ending of many other names, such as Doncaster, Winchester, etc., is almost the only word they can be proved to have taken from the Romanized Britons; while from the Celtic speech, as we have already seen, their borrowings were equally scanty.

The next great stratum in our language, the next great deposit of civilization, is that left by the conversion of the Angles and Saxons to Christianity in the VIth and VIIth Centuries. By their conversion they were transformed into members of the community of Europe; and at this point the two streams of Teutonic race and classical civilization at last met and mingled. In the VIth Century, however, Europe was plunged in the night of the Dark Ages; it was not the culture of

Athens and free Rome, the literature and philosophic thought of the great classical tradition, that the Christian missionaries brought to England, but the rites and the doctrines of the Church as they were preached and understood in the obscure period of the late Roman Empire. The effect on English life and thought was nevertheless immense. and we must test it, not only by the foreign words which were brought by Christianity into our language, but also by the change of meaning in our native words due to Christian influence. The early missionaries, in order to make their simpler and more fundamental doctrines clear to the understandings of their hearers, chose native words nearest the meanings they wished to express; and thus much of our religious vocabulary is formed out of old words filled with new significance, words such as *God*, *heaven*, *hell*, *love*, and *sin*. The Anglo-Saxons, indeed, like the modern Germans, preferred to translate, rather than to borrow foreign terms, and some Christian words were rendered by native equivalents which have since become obsolete, as *ród* or *rood*, the native word for the Latin *cross*.

Many Christian words were, nevertheless, borrowed from Greek and Latin, and still remain in the language as witnesses of that great transformation. Among them may be mentioned *altar*, *alb*, *candle*, *cowl*, *creed*, *disciple*, *font*, *nun*, *mass*, *shrine*, and *temple*, from Latin. *Acolyte*, *archbishop*, *anthem*, *apostle*, *canon*, *clerk*, *deacon*, *epistle*, *hymn*, *martyr*, *pentecost*, *pope*, *psalm*, *psalter*, and *stole* are words borrowed at the same time, which are of Greek origin, but which were adopted in Latin, and came from Latin into English.

If we examine the vocabulary of Continental Christianity, so large a part of which has been imported at various times into English, we shall see that most of the terms belong to the classical languages of Greece and Rome, but that they have been curiously transformed, and have acquired new and strange significations, by being made the medium of Christian thought and feeling. The Greek language did not possess terms to describe the deeper experiences of religious life; still less were such words to be found in the speech of the practical and warlike Romans. The task,

therefore, set before the early Christians was to forge from these materials a new language capable of expressing a whole new world of thought—the beautiful or dark conceptions of Oriental mysticism and introspection, the dizzy heights of Oriental poetry, and the joys and terrors of the soul. This task they accomplished with amazing success. Partly by changing the meaning of old words, partly by the formation of new derivatives, partly by violent translations of Hebrew idioms, and to a certain extent by borrowing Hebrew words, they found means to express such conceptions as *charity*, *salvation*, *purgatory*, *sacrament*, and *miracle*, and many others. *Sabbath* was borrowed from the Hebrew, *abbot* from the Syriac; the Greek word for "overseer," *episcopos*, became our *bishop;* the *daimon*, the god or divine power of the Greeks, was changed into the medieval *demon; eidolon*, a word for "image" or "phantom," became our *idol;* and the *aggelos*, or messenger, the *diabolos*, or slanderer, were transformed into the great figures of *Angel* and *Devil*.

There remain two other Christian words

which deserve more than a passing mention. One of these is *Easter*, in which is preserved the name of a pagan goddess of the dawn or spring, and of a pagan spring festival, which Christianity adopted to its purposes. The other word is *cross*, which embodies in its form an important aspect of English history. The word *crux*, which denoted an instrument of execution in classical Latin, and which was given by Christianity so tender and miraculous a meaning, was translated into Anglo-Saxon, as we have said, by the native word *ród*. *Cross* is a form borrowed by the Irish from the Latin *crux*, and spread by them, in their great missionary efforts among the Danish populations whom they converted in the north of England. It appears first of all in northern place-names like Crosby, Crosthwaite, etc., and finally makes its way from the northern dialects into literary English. The word *cross*, therefore, which we employ in so many and often such trivial uses, is a memorial for us of the golden age of Irish civilization, when Ireland was the great seminary of Europe, whence missionaries travelled to convert and civilize, not

only the pagan north of England, but a large part of the Continent as well.

The conversion of England meant, however, not only the introduction of a new religion. The flood of Christianity flowed from sources deep in the past of Greece and Asia, and brought with it much of the secular thought and knowledge which it had gathered on its way; and the union of England, moreover, to the universal Church opened for our ancestors the door into the common civilization of Europe. Of the effect of these influences on Anglo-Saxon culture, the growth of literature and learning, before the Conquest, it is hardly within our province to speak; the Anglo-Saxon language, with its multitude of terms formed from native elements, was partially destroyed, as we have seen, at the Norman Conquest, and almost all its learned words perished—we are only concerned with the deposit left in our living English speech by this first great flood of European culture. With the Bible came words redolent of the East, like *camel*, *lion*, *palm*, *cedar*, and terms of drugs and spices, like *cassia* and *hyssop*, and *myrrh*, which was one of the offerings of the

Magi to the infant Christ. *Gem*, too, is a Bible word, and *crystal*, which our ancestors used not only for the mineral, but for ice as well, as they believed rock-crystal to be a form of petrified ice. The more secular part of the early deposit of borrowed words from other sources resolves itself very largely, like the earlier Continental borrowings, into the names of useful instruments, animals, plants, and products. *Cup*, *kiln*, *mortar*, *mat*, *post*, *pitch*, *fan* (for winnowing), *plaster* (in its medical use), are among the early English borrowings, and with them the names of *capon*, *lobster*, *trout*, *mussel*, and *turtle* (for turtle-dove), and of useful plants like *cole* (cabbage), *parsley*, *pease*, *asparagus*, *beet*, *fennel*, *radish*, with trees like *pine* and *box*.

The *lily* and the *rose* are also Anglo-Saxon borrowings, but seem to have been used first in literary allusions. The names *India* and *Saracen* reached England before the Norman Conquest; and there are two far-wandered words like the earlier *pepper*, and the later *orange*, which travelled to Anglo-Saxon England from remote sources in the East. One of them, our familiar word *ginger*, is derived

from the Sanskrit, and believed to belong ultimately to one of the non-Aryan languages of India. Ginger was imported into Greece and Italy from India, by the way of the Red Sea; ancient merchants brought its name with them, whence it came to us through Greek and Latin. *Silk* is believed to have come all the way from China, and to have reached us from Greece and Rome through some Slavonic language, and by means of early traders in the Baltic provinces. *Phœnix*, the name of an imaginary bird, and *adamant*, used in literature to describe a half-fabulous rock or crystal, combining the qualities of the diamond and the loadstone, were, with the earlier *drake*, the first of the names of the legendary animals and jewels to reach us from the East. *Purple*, being the name of the royal cloth worn by kings, was, like the earlier *Cæsar*, a reminiscence of the Roman Empire; *school*, *scholar*, *verse*, *philosophe*, are faint gleams, penetrating in the dark ages of this remote island, from the light of Athenian civilization. The words *circle* and *horoscope* borrowed late in the Old English period, are traces of the interest which the Anglo-Saxons

took in mathematics and astrology. But among the words of learned borrowing that seem to have survived the Norman Conquest, not a few were really forgotten with their companions, and were adopted again from the French. Thus the antique and noble word *philosopher*, which King Alfred had taken from the Latin in the form of *philosophe*, appeared again in the XIVth Century in the French form of *filosofe; circle* and *horoscope* also perished, and were re-borrowed in the same century; and our word *scholar* probably comes to us not from Early English, but from the later French.

While the terms, therefore, for the common and unchanging experience of life, for the most vivid of human conceptions, sun and summer, moon, stars and night, heat and cold, sea and land, hand and heart, and for the commonest human ties and strongest human feelings, remain in English substantially unchanged from the terms that the Angles and Saxons inherited from a prehistoric past, practically all our terms of learning and higher civilization have been borrowed from the Continent, and especially from France. The conquered

island of England was for centuries a pale moon, illuminated by the sun of French civilization; and it must now be our task to trace the penetration of that light into the English language and the common consciousness of the English people. For the influence of France before the Conquest language gives little evidence. We find two or three French names for drugs or herbs in learned works, and at the time that *ginger* was borrowed from the Latin, *galingale* came through France after even a longer journey, having travelled through Arabia and Persia all the way (it is believed) from China, where it was, in its original form, *Ko-liang-kiang*, "mild ginger from Ko," a place in the province of Canton.

Two other French words borrowed before the Conquest are of considerable interest. These are *pride*, which appears about A.D. 1000, and *proud*, which came in about fifty years later. They are both derived from the French *prud* (*preux* in modern French), which descends from the first element in the Latin verb *prodesse*, "to be of value." These words, which in French had the meaning of "valiant,

brave, gallant," soon acquired in English the sense of "arrogant, haughty, overweening." This change of meaning was due, perhaps, to the bearing of the "proud" Normans who came over to England before the Conquest in the train of Edward the Confessor, and the aspect in which these haughty nobles and ecclesiastics presented themselves to the Englishmen they scorned. Another word introduced at this time, and no doubt by Edward the Confessor, is *Chancellor*—a word full of old history, which, for all its present dignity, is derived ultimately from *cancer*, the Latin word for crab. How the *cancellarius*, a petty officer of the Eastern Empire, stationed at the bars or crab-like lattices (*cancelli*) of the law courts, rose from an usher to be notary or secretary, and came to be invested with judicial functions, and to play a more and more important part in the Western Empire, belongs, however, to European, and not to English history; but the word is of interest to us as being one of the three or four French terms that found their way into English in Anglo-Saxon times.

Before we dismiss the subject of Anglo-

Saxon borrowings, there are a few words of Danish derivation that should be mentioned. The greater part of the Scandinavian words in English have not much historical significance, save in so far as they are a record of the Danish invasions, and the large Danish element in the English population. The great word *law*, however, and such terms as *moot*, *hustings*, and the names for the divisions of counties, *wapentake* and *riding*, all of which appear in English in the late Anglo-Saxon period, are memorials of the fact that England was once partly settled and ruled by Danes.

We now come to the Norman Conquest, which was destined to change and transform our language in so radical a manner. Of its effect on English grammar we have already spoken; its influence on the English vocabulary was still greater, but did not make itself felt for a considerable period of time. For nearly one hundred and fifty years the two languages, Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French, ran side by side without mingling; French being the language of the government and the aristocracy, while English was reduced almost to the condition of a

peasant's dialect. Some relics, however, of written English during the first hundred years after the Conquest have been preserved, and after the year 1150 these grew somewhat more numerous; although, as we have seen, it was not till the XIVth Century that a standard English was established, and authors ceased to employ in writing their own local dialects.

The largest class of words adopted into English between the Conquest and the year 1200 are of an ecclesiastical character, and show the influence of the Norman devotion to the Church. These words in approximately chronological order are *prior*, *chaplain*, *procession*, *nativity*, *cell*, *miracle*, *charity*, *archangel*, *evangelist*, *grace*, *mercy*, *passion*, *paradise*, *sacrament*, *saint*—words that we may associate with the solemn abbeys and cathedral churches of Norman architecture, which were then being built in so many parts of England. The remaining words are almost all connected with government and war and agriculture. *Court* and *crown*, *empress*, *legate*, *council*, *prison*, *robber* and *justice*, *rent* in the sense of property, are the terms of govern-

ment; while for military words we find *tower* and *castle, standard, peace,* and *treason. War,* another early borrowing, is a word adopted into French from old German; it came to us in its Norman form, but has become (with the common change of *w* to *gu*) *guerre* in modern French.

In the XIIIth Century the process of borrowing went on with great rapidity, and hundreds of French words were adopted into English, which now began to assume the composite character which it has ever since retained. An analysis of these words will give some notion of the character of this period, beginning with the turbulent reign of King John, and continued during those of his son Henry III, and his grandson Edward I. In the first place we find a great accession, especially in the first half of the century, to the vocabulary of religion. The earlier of these represent Catholicism more in its formal and outward aspect; but shortly after the coming of the preaching friars to England, when the effects of the great religious revival of the Continent were brought home to the villagers and poor townsfolk, we find other words

representing the inward and personal aspect of religious faith, *devotion*, *pity*, *patience*, *comfort*, *anguish*, *conscience*, *purity*, *salvation*. These words we may call, not perhaps too fantastically, "early Gothic" words, as their introduction coincides in date with the great churches, such as Salisbury Cathedral, and the great monastic houses, which were then being erected in what is called the "Early English" period of Gothic architecture.

Another religious movement of about this period, that of the Crusades, has left its mark on the English language. By the Crusades the gulf between Europe and the Orient was again bridged, and Eastern products and Eastern ideas began to spread over Europe. The East was from of old the home of jewels, rich dyes, and splendid stuffs, and among the Arabian or Persian words that came to us from this new intercourse with the Orient, are terms like *azure* and *saffron*, of *scarlet*, which was at first the name of a rich cloth, and *damask*, from the name of the town Damascus. To this period we owe also the Arabian names, and our modern knowledge, of two of the great staples of modern trade, *cotton* and

sugar; and the word *orange*, which (like *sugar*) came from Sanskrit through the medium of Persian and Arabic, found its way to the West in the train of the Crusaders. Others of the Crusaders' words are *assassin*, *Bedouin*, *hazard*, *lute*, *caravan*, and *mattress*, from Arabian sources; *miscreant*, and perhaps *capstan* of French or Provençal formation. *Assassin* is, like *Bedouin*, a plural noun, meaning "hash-ish-eaters." It was used by the Crusaders for the murderers who were sent forth by the Old Man of the Mountains to kill the Christian leaders, and who were wont to intoxicate themselves with hashish or hemp before undertaking these attempts. *Hazard* (originally a game played with dice) has been traced to the name of a castle, Hasart, or Asart, in Palestine, during the siege of which the game is said to have been invented. *Miscreant* (misbeliever) is a term of abuse for the Mohammedans, invented by the French Crusaders; *Capstan* is a nautical term from Provence, and as it appears earlier in English than in French, it was perhaps borrowed at this time by English seamen at Marseilles or Barcelona.

These Crusaders' words, however, drifted

into English at various times, for the most part long after the XIIIth Century; of words actually adopted at this time, the most important, after the religious terms already mentioned, are terms of law, government, and war. It was in the XIIIth Century that English law and English legal institutions began to take the form that they were destined to keep for the future, and we find now in English (for the most part borrowed from the Anglo-French language of law), such words as *judge* and *judgment*, *inquest*, *assize*, *accuse* and *acquit*, *fine*, *imprison*, *felon*, *hue and cry*, *plea*, *pleader* and *to plead*, with a number of other terms relating to property or feudal usages, such as *manor*, *heir*, *feoff*, *homage*. It is in this century, too, that the English Parliament assumed substantially its present form, and the great word *Parliament* makes its first appearance. The campaigns of Edward I against the Welsh and the Scotch seem to have familiarized his subjects with many military terms in the latter part of the XIIIth Century, and it is now that *battle*, *armour*, *assault*, *conquer*, and *pursue* are first found in the vocabulary of English.

If in the XIIIth Century the degraded and poverty-stricken English language had begun to enlarge and enrich its vocabulary with terms of religion, law, government, and war, in the following century it became a fit vehicle at last for thought, learning, and speculation, and absorbed into its texture practically all the vocabulary of medieval culture. We find first of all those names of exotic animals that figured so fantastically in the medieval imagination. The *ostrich*, the *leopard*, the *panther*, already made their appearance in the XIIIth Century; these in the next hundred years were followed by the *crocodile*, the *hippopotamus*, the *elephant*, the *dromedary*, the *rhinoceros*, the *camelopard*, the *hyena*, the *tiger*, and the *pard*. But with the names of these real beasts came a host of fabulous and fantastic creatures, equally real, however, to the medieval mind, the *monoceros* or *unicorn*, the *syren*, who was half woman and half fish, the *onocentaur*, with the head of a man and the body of an ass, the *griffin*, with an eagle's wings and a lion's body, the *salamander*, which lived in flame, the fire-breathing *chimera*, the *basilisk* or *cockatrice*, which was hatched by

a serpent from a cock's egg, and whose glance was fatal, the *dipsas*, whose bite produced a raging thirst, and the *amphisbæna*, a serpent with a head at either end. And even of the authentic and actually existing animals their beliefs were almost equally fabulous; to them the camelion was a combination of the camel and the lion, the camelopard had the body of a pard and a lion's head; the elephant was supposed to hide its offspring in deep water to protect it from dragons; and our phrase, "crocodiles' tears" is due to the belief that crocodiles wept while they sated themselves on human flesh.

With the knowledge of these exotic beasts and serpents, came also the names of many jewels and precious stones, with their supposed magical qualities. The *carbuncle*, which shone in the dark, the *amethyst*, which preserved its possessor from intoxication, the *jacinth* which warded off sadness, and which, with the *chrysophrase*, was found in the heads of Ethiopian dragons, the *sapphire*, which gave its possessor the power of prophecy, appear in the English of the XIIIth Century; while in the XIVth are found the beryl, which

preserves domestic peace, the *diamond*, which discovers poison, *jasper*, useful against fevers, and *coral* against enchantments, *chalcedony* against ghosts and drowning, and the names of other precious materials such as *amber*, *ebony*, *alabaster*, *jet*, and *pearl*. When, however, we examine the vocabulary of medicine, we find ourselves in a less fabulous world. The medical lore of the Middle Ages was somewhat more directly founded on experience, and already in the XIIIth Century we find such words as *medicine*, *ointment*, *poison*, *powder*, *diet*, *physic*, *physician*, *dropsy*, *gout*, *malady*, with approximately their modern and scientific meanings. This medical vocabulary is increased in the XIVth Century by *apothecary*, *artery*, *pore*, *vein;* the names of drugs like *opium*, and of diseases such as *asthma*, *quinsy*, *palsy*, and *dysentery*.

But if we examine the theory of medicine on which the practice of these medieval physicians is based, we find ourselves far removed indeed from modern science. This theory is in the main the Greek theory of "humours" which reached Europe in the XIth and XIIth Centuries from the great schools of Arabian

medicine. According to this theory the body of man contains four "humours," or liquids: blood, phlegm, yellow bile (or choler) and black bile (or melancholy), the last of which is a purely imaginary substance. The excess of one of these humours might cause disease, or make a man odd or fantastic; and hence we have the *humours* of the Elizabethan drama, our phrases *good-humoured* or *bad-humoured*, and our modern use of *humorous* and *humour*. That the Latin word for a liquid or fluid has come to mean a mood, or a quality exciting amusement, and that we can even speak of "dry humour," is due, therefore, to this old physiology, which has left many other marks on the English language. An examination of some of our commonest expressions will show how many of them bear the impress of medieval thought, and how great is the deposit left in the English language by the science and culture of the Middle Ages. Thus our names for different temperaments, *sanguine*, *phlegmatic*, *choleric*, and *melancholy*, are derived from the supposed predominance in each one of the four humours. The word *temperament* itself, which has become

so popular of late, is derived from the Latin *temperamentum*, meaning "due mixture," and was used at first for the mixture of these humours; and the familiar word *complexion* (derived from the Latin *complexionem*, formed from the verb *plectere*, to weave or twine) had originally the same meaning as *temperament*, although now it is mainly used for the appearance of the skin. As the temperament or complexion, sanguine, bilious, phlegmatic, or melancholy, could be best observed in the face, this step from a man's physical condition to its appearance in his face, was a natural one, although it requires some knowledge of medieval notions to trace the relation of the modern adjective *complex* and such a phrase as "a fair complexion."

Closely connected with the four humours were the four elementary "qualities": dryness and moisture, heat and cold. There were also qualities of the "humours," and by their mixture produced various complexions and temperaments: *temper* itself was originally a due mixture or proportion of these qualities, and this use has survived in such words as *distemper*, and "good" or "bad" *tempered*. As

temper was most frequently used in combination with words like "ill," "bad," or "violent," it has acquired in the XIXth Century (in such a phrase, for instance, as "an outburst of temper"), the very opposite of its original meaning. For an outburst of temper would have meant "an outburst of composure"; and while we keep the old meaning in the phrase "to keep one's temper," our other phrase, "to have a temper" exactly contradicts it. *Spirited, animal spirits,* and *good spirits* are other phrases due to the physiologists of the Middle Ages, who regarded the arteries as air-ducts, containing ethereal fluids distinct from the blood of the veins. Of these "spirits," there were supposed to be three, the *animal,* the *vital,* and the *natural.* The "animal," being named after the soul or *anima,* was the highest, and controlled the brain and nerves. When *animal* in the XVIIth Century became restricted in meaning to living creatures lower than man, *animal spirits* changed with it, and came to mean the joy of life we share with animals. Phrases such as *cold-blooded,* in *cold* or *hot blood,* or my *blood boils,* are due also to the old view, de-

rived from the sensations of the face, that the blood is heated by excitement; while an immense number of words and phrases, *hearty*, *heartless*, *to take to heart*, *to learn by heart*, and *cordial* (from the Latin word for heart) are due to the old belief that the heart was the seat of the intellect, the soul, and feelings. So, too, *hypochondriacal*, and its modern abbreviation *hipped*, come to us from the medieval belief that the region of the hypochondria, containing the liver, spleen, etc., was the seat of the "melancholy" humour. Another medical error is embodied in the old word *rheumatic*, as rheumatism was believed to be a defluxion of rheum to the affected part; and there is a reminiscence of medieval psychology to be found in *common sense*—the *common sense* being a supposed "internal" sense, acting as a common bond or centre for the five "external" senses.

The XIIIth Century word *lunatic* is evidence of the early belief that mental health was affected by the changes of the moon; while the adjectives *jovial*, *saturnine*, *mercurial*, are due of course to the astrological belief that men owed their temperaments to the

planets under which they were born. Indeed, the large deposit left by medieval astrology in the English language is a sufficient proof of the great part that celestial phenomena, and the supposed influence of the stars on the affairs of men, played in the imaginative life of the Middle Ages. *Influence* itself (derived from the Latin *influere*, to flow in), was at first a term of astrology, and meant the emanation from the stars to men of an ethereal fluid, which affected their characters and fates; and our modern word *influenza* embodies the old belief that epidemics were caused by astral influence. *Disaster* and *ill-starred* need no explanation; *ascendant*, *predominant*, *conjunction*, and *opposition* are other words of astrology; *aspect* meant originally the way the planets look down on the earth; and men derived their *dispositions* from the "dispositions" or situations of their native planets. Even our current word *motor* has descended to earth from the heavens, for it was first used to describe the *primus motor* or *primum mobile*, the imaginary tenth sphere, added by the Arabian philosopher Avicenna, to the nine spheres of the Greeks.

Amalgam, *alembic*, *alkali*, *arsenic*, *tartar*, are alchemists' words which made their first English appearance in the XIVth Century; *quintessence*, which appears a little later, was another alchemists' term, describing the imaginary fifth essence added by Aristotle to the four, Earth, Air, Fire, Water, of the early Greek philosophers. The XIVth Century word *test*, and the later *alcohol*, are also terms of alchemy. *Alcohol* meant originally a fine powder; and *test* is derived (through *testum*) from the Latin word *testa*, an earthen vessel or pot, which, through ancient slang, has become *tête*, the French word for "head." It was used by the alchemists to describe the metal vessel in which they made their alloys. From such a phrase as Shakespeare's *tested gold* has arisen the verb to *test*, which is now commonly used in England, although it was regarded as an Americanism not many years ago.

The names of the seven liberal sciences of medieval teaching, the "arts" of the universities, *Grammar*, *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, *Arithmetic*, *Geometry*, *Music*, *Astronomy*, were early adopted into English from the Latin in which they were taught, and with them came in the

XIIIth and XIVth Centuries a number of terms of learning and culture, such as *melody*, *rhyme*, *comedy*, *tragedy*, *theatre*, *philosophy*, and *history*. These words belonging as they do to the culminating period of the Middle Ages, may be associated with the rich and decorated forms into which Gothic architecture flowered at about the same period.

The learning and science of the Middle Ages, or at least that part of it which was assimilated during the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries into English thought, can be, perhaps, as fairly estimated by the lists of these learned borrowings as by any other method. Some of them were no doubt mere ink-horn terms, and had no current use at that time outside the books in which they are found; the greater part appear, however, in the works of popular writers like Chaucer and Gower, and so must have become familiar to the educated contemporaries of the poets.

An etymological analysis, moreover, of this vocabulary of medieval culture will show, with surprising accuracy, the sources from which that culture was derived, and the channels through which it passed on its way

to England. We find in the first place that practically all these words were borrowed from the French; that the French borrowed them from Latin, and that, with the exception of some Arabian words, the ultimate source of almost all of them was Greek. They represent, indeed, the wrecks and fragments of Greek learning which had been absorbed into Roman civilization, and which, after the destruction of the classical world, were handed on through the Dark Ages from compilation to compilation, growing dimmer and more obscure, more overlaid with errors and fantastic notions, in this process of stale reproduction. Such as it was, however, this body of learning, derived for the most part from abridgments of Aristotle, was not questioned; medieval science was based, not on the observation of Nature, but on the study of the ancients; and a writer of natural history in this period felt it necessary to quote the authority of Aristotle in support of so elementary a statement as that eggs are hardened by heat, or hatched by the brooding of their female parents.

In the XIIIth Century, however, this body

of learning had been much increased by a great accession from Arabian sources. We have already mentioned the effect of the first contact, during the Crusades, between the East and West; by means of the peaceful intercourse which followed, Europe drew immense profit from the high culture of the civilized Arabs, who, in the East or in Spain, kept the torch of learning alight, while Europe was still enveloped in comparative darkness. The Arabs had preserved through Syriac versions the works of Aristotle, and much of the astronomical and medical learning of ancient Greece; in the XIIIth Century this body of learning reached Europe by means of translations from Arabic into Latin. This accession of knowledge from Eastern sources accounts for the greater part of the Arabic words adopted into English. *Zero*, *almanac*, *algebra*, *cipher*, *azimuth*, *nadir*, *zenith*, *alembic*, *alkali*, *camphor*, *alcohol*, *amber*, are Arabian words. *Alchemy*, *alembic*, and perhaps *amalgam*, are Greek words given an Arabic shape by passing through that language. The rest of this early vocabulary comes in the main, as has been said, from Greek sources. The

names of jewels and precious materials, of animals real or imaginary, are Greek; *pard* and *sapphire*, and perhaps *tiger*, *ebony*, *beryl*, and *jasper*, are words early borrowed by the Greeks from Oriental languages; *alabaster* and *ammoniac*, and perhaps *alchemy*, came to Greece from Egyptian sources; while *ostrich* is a hybrid word, formed in popular Latin from the Latin *avis*, and *strouthion*, the Greek name for ostrich.

The medical vocabulary is for the most part Greek, and the Latin medical words are in the main translations from Greek. The vocabulary of astronomy is more largely Latin; but almost all these words also are direct translations from Greek, and are no proof of additions made by the Romans to this science. Save in war, politics, law, and agriculture, the practical and unimaginative Romans made few or no additions to culture; and the study of languages, as well as other studies, leads us sooner or later back to Greece, to the art and thought of that small and ancient people, from which almost all that is highest in our civilization descends.

There is, however, one more department of

medieval thought which, owing to its effect on English life and language, must by no means be omitted in this hasty survey. This is the study of logic, which more than any other subject absorbed the intellectual energies of the Middle Ages. Philosophy was in a sense the passion of the XIIIth Century in Europe, when Scholasticism formed the mould of thought which lasted till the revival of learning. About Scholasticism, with its quibbles and quiddities, there still lingers much of the ridicule poured on it at the Renaissance, and this is no place to do justice to this great medieval effort to understand the metaphysical basis of thought, and to reconcile reason and the Christian faith. It can only be said that there can be no more pervasive, permanent, and important influence on civilization than metaphysical discussion, barren and abstract and fruitless as it at first appears. In the scholastic disputes of the Middle Ages, habits of accurate reasoning were formed; the intellect was trained to deal with abstract ideas, and terms were borrowed or coined for their expression. Preachers, educated not in secluded monasteries, but in

secular universities, visited or took up their residence in English villages, and through their sermons familiarized their hearers with at least some of the great abstractions and distinctions of Aristotelian thought. By this means, and by means of the lawyers, and of Wyclif's popular writings, a great part of the scholastic terminology was absorbed into the English language. Indeed, our present vocabulary of philosophic terms is very largely a production of Scholasticism, and owes its admirable clearness and definiteness to the hard-thinking of these old logicians, and already in the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries we find in English writings such words as *accident*, *absolute*, *apprehension*, *attribute*, *cause*, *essence*, *existence*, *matter* and *form*, *quality* and *quantity*, *general* and *special*, *object* and *subject*, *particular* and *universal*, *substance*, *intelligence*, and *intellect*.

Medieval philosophy, like the rest of medieval learning, can make no great claims to originality; its basis was the Aristotelian logic, and its vocabulary, although almost entirely Latin, was formed for the most part by the literal translation into Latin of Aris-

totelian terms. It cannot, however, be said that Scholasticism made no contributions to human thought; the distinction, for instance, between Free Will and Determinism was not clearly defined in Greek philosophy, but was fully developed by the medieval philosophers and theologians. *Predestination* is a word first found in St. Augustine, and *Free Will* an English translation of the Latin phrase of a Church Father. By means, moreover, of the disputations and the subtle distinctions of the scholastic logicians, much that was latent or obscure in Greek philosophy was brought into greater clearness; and a large number of words were formed in Low Latin to express these conceptions and distinctions. *Entity* and *identity*, *majority* and *minority*, *duration*, *existence*, *ideal*, *individual*, *real* and *reality*, *intuition*, *object*, *motive*, *tendency*, *predicate*, are among the words that English owes to late, and not to classical Latin. Our word *premise* or *premises* is a term of logic, which came into use originally as the translation into Latin of an Arabic word meaning "put before." From the premises of a syllogism, it acquired a legal meaning, and used for "the aforesaid" in

legal documents, it soon was applied to "the aforesaid houses, lands or tenements" mentioned in the "premises" of the deed, and so acquired its present use of a house with its grounds or other appurtenances.

Whenever, indeed, a large number of new words, however learned and abstract their character, make their appearance in a language, the genius of popular speech is sure to appropriate some of them, in its own illogical and often absurd way, to its own practical uses. We are all familiar with the "horn" of a dilemma, though few of us trace it to the *argumentum cornutum* of scholastic argument. *Quiddity* is a scholastic word, and perhaps, *quandary* also; and even the modern *locomotive* is formed from the medieval translation of a phrase of Aristotle. *Species*, one of the great words of scholastic logic, was soon appropriated in the early form of *spice* by the medieval druggists to describe the four kinds of ingredients in which they traded—saffron, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmegs. But the main agents in the distribution of these words were the lawyers of the Middle Ages. Scholastic words and scholastic

distinctions found their way into Anglo-French, and then into English. "While as yet there was little science and no popular science," Prof. Maitland writes, "the lawyer mediated between the abstract Latin logic of the schoolmen and the concrete needs and homely talk of gross, unschooled mankind. Law was the point where life and logic met."

If, therefore, we were to study the history of almost any of the great terms of ancient or medieval philosophy, and trace all the varied and often remote uses to which it has been applied, we should be able to observe the effect of the drifting down, into the popular consciousness, of the definitions of high and abstract thought. We should find that many of our commonest notions and most obvious distinctions were by no means as simple and as self-evident as we think them now, but were the result of severe intellectual struggles carried on through hundreds of years; and that some of the words we put to the most trivial uses are tools fashioned long ago by old philosophers, theologians, and lawyers, and sharpened on the whetstone of each other's brains.

CHAPTER VIII

LANGUAGE AND HISTORY—THE MODERN PERIOD

By the end of the XIVth Century the English language had absorbed into itself the greater part of the vocabulary of medieval learning, and had been formed into a standard and literary form of speech for the whole nation. But from the point of view of vocabulary, the XVth Century marks a pause. England, exhausted and demoralized by its disastrous conflicts abroad in France, and by the Wars of the Roses at home, had little energy to devote to the higher interests of civilization; literature languished, and the vocabulary of this period shows but little advance on that of the previous age. Some medical and chemical terms were added to it; the poems of Lydgate at the beginning, and the works printed by Caxton at the end of the *century* contain many new words: but we

cannot find in them many signs of new conceptions, or of any great additions to life and thought.

Perhaps the most curious of these new terms are the words derived from medieval games and sports, and the large accession of sea-terms, borrowed from the Dutch, which make their appearance at about this time. Among hawking terms had already appeared, in the previous century, the word *reclaim*, derived through the French from the Latin *reclamare*. *Reclamare*, however, meant in Latin "to cry out against," "to contradict"; it acquired in hawking the technical sense of calling back a hawk to the fist, and so the notion of calling back or "reclaiming" a person from a wrong course of action. Among XVth Century hawking words may be mentioned *rebate*, which meant to bring back to the fist a "bating" hawk; to *allure*, from the older *lure* (of obscure etymology), an apparatus for recalling hawks, and to *rouse*, used first for the hawk's shaking its feathers. *Haggard* is a somewhat later word, and being used of a wild hawk, has been derived from the French word for hedge, *haie*; but this

etymology is doubtful. Among early terms borrowed from the chase is the word to *worry*, which meant "to seize by the throat," and the curious verb to *muse*, which is believed to be derived from the same word as *muzzle*, and to mean originally the action of a dog holding up his nose or *muzzle* to sniff the air when in doubt about the scent. The early word *scent* (derived ultimately from the Latin *sentire*) was first a hunting term; and the later word *sagacious*, meant originally in English "acute of scent." *Retrieve*, the French *retrouver*, is also a hunting term, and our verb to *abet* is supposed to come through the French, from the Norse *beita*, "to cause to bite"; and if so is, perhaps, like *tryst*, another hunting term, one of the few Scandinavian words preserved by the Normans after their settlement in France. Its original meaning was "to bait or hound dogs on their prey"; and then, from the action of inciting some one to commit a crime, it acquired its present meaning. A *relay* was originally a set of fresh hounds posted to take up the chase; a *couple* was a leash for holding two hounds together; *ruse* (which is the same word as *rush*) was a dou-

bling or turning of the hunted animal; and the hounds were said to *run riot* when they followed the wrong scent. Our verb to *rove* is a term of XVth Century archery, obscure in origin; it meant originally to shoot arrows at a mark selected at random, and has no connection with *rover*, a sea-term word borrowed from the Dutch, and cognate with our old word *reaver* or robber.

These words give us a little glimpse into the sports of our medieval ancestors; and we may add to them the verb to *check* or *checkmate*, a chess term, derived through the Arabian from the Persian *Shah* or king. The later terms derived from sports are *bias*, the colloquial phrase to *bowl over*, and the word *rub* in the familiar phrase "there's the rub"—all from the game of bowls: while *crestfallen* and *white feather* come to us from the cockpit.

Our language shows the close connection that existed from early medieval times, between England and the Low Countries. *Pack* (from which *package* and *packet* are derived) is an early word in English, used in the wool trade, and apparently came to us in the XIIth or XIIIth Century from the Dutch or Flemish

Latin and Greek words began to appear in English, not borrowed through the medium of Low Latin or medieval French, but taken direct from the classics. We note in this century the appearance of many Renaissance words like *Arcadian*, *Dryad*, *Hesperian*, *Elysian*, which brought with them the echoes of the great poetry of Greece and Rome. At the same time a secular meaning was given to many old words which had had hitherto only a religious use and signification.

It was, indeed, in this century that the foundations were laid of the new and modern world in which we live; old words were given new meanings, or borrowed to express the new conceptions, activities, and interests which have coloured and formed the life of the last three centuries. To the more fundamental of these conceptions, and their immense effect on the vocabulary of English, we must devote a special chapter; but first it will be well to mention the deposit of words left in the language by the various historical and religious movements and events of the XVIth and the succeeding centuries.

The first great modern movement was, of

course, the Protestant Reformation. The name *Protestant* came to England, probably from Germany, the old word *Reformation* was given a new use, and the derivatives *reformed* and *reformer* were made from it. *Evangelical* and *sincere* were new words much used by Protestants of their doctrines; and now, by their unfortunate identification of the Hebrew *Sabbath* with the Christian *Sunday*, they fastened on that day the sabbatic law of the Old Testament. *Godly* in its modern sense is first found, with the new derivatives, *godliness* and *godless*, in Tindale's writings; *religion*, which was used before of rites and observances or of monastic orders, was given by the Protestants its new and important abstract meaning of belief, and the state of mind it induces; *pious* was another of their new words, and the old *piety*, which had been sometimes used for *pity*, acquired from them its modern meaning. These words are a testimony of the new and inner religious life of the Protestants; and the Roman Catholic words *mission* and *missionary* (which were first used of the Jesuit missions) show the zeal of their opponents. This zeal showed itself also in a new

crop of controversial words; *pernicious*, *faction*, and *factious* first appear in the writings of Catholic controversialists, who, however, were soon eclipsed by the superior linguistic powers of the Protestants. It is in terms of abuse, as we have already noticed, that the gift for language is most vigorously displayed; and Tindale, Coverdale, and Latimer, to whom the English Bible and the Church Service owe so much, made liberal use also of their word-creating faculty to invent terms of obloquy for those who opposed their views.

Dunce (which was derived from the name of the scholastic philosopher, Duns Scotus) first appears, with *Romish*, *popery*, *popishness*, in the works of Tindale. *Duncely*, *monkery*, *popishly*, were used by Latimer; Luther's word *Romanist* was apparently introduced by Coverdale, who also seems to have invented for his own use *duncical*, *Babylonical*, and *Babylonish*. Other terms of Protestant vituperation which belong to this period are *Babylonian*, *malignant*, *papish*, *papistical*, *monkish*, with terms that are now obsolete, such as *popeling*, *duncery*, and the once common *abbey-lubber*. *Bigoted* and *bigotry* are

words of Protestant abuse of a somewhat later date. The history of *Roman Catholic* is a curious one. The terms *Roman*, *Romanist*, and *Romish*, had acquired by the end of the XVIth Century so invidious a meaning, that the need for a non-controversial term was felt, and *Roman Catholic* was adopted for this purpose. It was employed, as the *Oxford Dictionary* states, for conciliatory reasons in the negotiations for the Spanish marriage of Charles I, and thus found its way into general use.

While still engaged in their quarrel with the old faith, the Protestants soon began those controversies among themselves by which the English vocabulary has been enriched; and already in the XVIth Century we note the words *Puritan*, *precise*, and *precision*, and also *libertine*, which was first used as the name of the antinomian sect of Anabaptists. *Reprobate* is a sinister word which belongs to this period, being a Calvinist term for souls rejected by God, and foredoomed to eternal misery.

To turn, however, from these old controversies to secular matters, we find that the

English language became, after the middle of the XVIth Century, greatly enriched by far-fetched and exotic words, gathered from the distant East and West by the English travellers, merchants, and adventurous pirates. The English people, who had so long used their energies in the vain attempt to conquer France, found now at last their true vocation in seamanship, and their true place of expansion in the trade, and finally the empire, of India and America. The exotic words that had found their way into English before this date, had, as we have seen, come almost entirely at second hand by the way of France; but now that England was forming a more independent civilization of her own, and Englishmen were getting for themselves a wider knowledge of the world, the French influence, although still strong, was not paramount, and these travellers' words were borrowed either directly from native languages, or from the speech of the Portuguese, Dutch, and Spaniards, who had preceded English sailors in the distant countries of the East and West. Of our words belonging to this period, and derived from the *languages* of India and the Far East, *calico*

was taken from the name of Calicut; *coolie* and *curry* seem to have come through Portuguese; the Malayan words *bamboo, cockatoo* through Dutch, *junk* through Spanish or Italian, and *gong* (another word from Malay) was probably a direct borrowing. *Indigo* is from Portuguese; *monsoon* is believed to be an Arabian word, but it came to us from the Dutch, who had borrowed it from the Portuguese. *Typhoon* is also Arabian, but ultimately Greek in origin. From the near East, *coffee* is an Arabian, and *dervish* a Persian word, reaching us through Turkish, while *harem* and *hashish* and *magazine* were borrowed direct from Arabian. *Banana* is supposed to be a native African word from the Congo district; it reached us, like *negro*, through Portuguese or Spanish. The early words from the languages of the West Indies, Mexico, and South America, all come to us, as we might expect, from the language of the early Spanish conquerors and explorers of these countries. *Alligator* is a popular corruption of the Spanish name for the lizard, *el* or *al lagarto; chocolate, cocoa, tomato*, are Mexican; *cannibal, hurricane, hammock, savannah*,

maize, Caribbean words; while *canoe*, *tobacco*, and *potato* are from the island of Hayti, and *guano* from Peru. All these come to us through the medium of Spanish.

Cannibal and *canoe* are of interest to us, as words brought back to Europe by Christopher Columbus; and in *cannibal*, as in the name *West Indies*, and in *Indian* for the American aborigines is embodied the geographical error of the time, when Columbus believed that in his voyage across the Atlantic he had reached what are now called the East Indies. For when he heard the name Caniba (which is simply a variant of Carib or Caribes) he thought that it signified that this savage people were subjects of the Grand Khan of Tartary, whose domains he believed to be not far distant. Other words associated with early travellers are *mulatto*, which is first found in the account of Drake's last voyage, and *breeze*, which in the XVIth Century was an adaptation of the Spanish *briza*, a name for the north-east trade-wind in the Spanish Main, and which first appears in the account of one of Hawkins's voyages. With these old *sailors'* words we may associate the words

brought back to England by Captain Cook from the Pacific in the XVIIIth Century, *tattoo*, *kangaroo*, and *taboo*. *Sassafras* seems to be the earliest word borrowed from North America (if, indeed, it be not a corruption of the Latin *saxifraga*), and came into English through the Spanish. The XVIIth Century words from North America, *moccasin*, *persimmon*, *opossum*, *tomahawk*, *hickory*, *terrapin*, were borrowed directly from Indian speech by the English settlers of North America.

There is much in the history and etymology of words that is merely curious and quaint, and possesses little but an archæological interest. That *trowsers* should be traced back to the Greek *thyrsos*, and that *banjo* and *goloshes* should also be able to boast of an illustrious Greek descent, is certainly interesting; but these associations can do but little to add poetic dignity to such words. Other words there are that gain immensely in value when we know their history; and among them must be counted these exotic words of Elizabethan travel and adventure, *cannibal*, *hurricane*, *alligator*, *savannah*, *breeze*, *monsoon;* and we still may feel some of the strangeness

of remote people and places that echoed in them, when far-travelled seamen brought them back to English seaports from the Indian Ocean or the Spanish Main.

To the war with Spain in the reign of Elizabeth we owe the Spanish words *embargo* and *contraband*, and the Dutch word *free-booter*. Among other Dutch or Flemish terms that were, perhaps, brought back to England by soldiers from their campaigns in the Low Countries may be mentioned *furlough*, *cashier*, *leaguer*, *sconce*, *onslaught*, *drill*, and *domineer*. *Comrade* is a Spanish word, but seems to have been a soldiers' term learnt in the Low Countries; and *forlorn hope* is a military phrase, being the Dutch *verloren hoop*, in which *hoop* means a troop, and is cognate with our word "heap."

The separation from Rome, the founding of a National Church, the war with Spain, and the great victory over the Armada, did much to awaken Englishmen to a sense of national pride and consciousness. In the Middle Ages England shared in the cosmopolitan civilization of Europe, with its Catholic Church and its ideal of a universal empire; dynastic

pretensions were paramount to those of nationality, and even the claim of English kings to the French Crown was supported by a considerable part of the population of that country. But in the XVIth Century the ideal of nationality, of political unity and independence, began to take the prominent place in men's thoughts and feelings which it has since preserved, and we can trace this growth in the curiously late appearance in the English language of what we may call "patriotic" terms. *Nation* was an early word, but it was used more with the notion of different races than that of national unity, and was indeed commonly employed to describe any class or kind of persons. It gained its present meaning in the XVIth Century, and late in that century we find the adjective *national* formed from it; and we can note at about the same date the appearance of such terms as *fellow-countryman* and *mother-country*. *Fatherland* and *compatriot* appear a little later, and *patriot* and *patriotic* belong to the middle of the XVIIth Century, but did not acquire their present meaning until a hundred years later, at which time *patriotism* is found.

Public in the sense of "public-spirited" belongs to the early XVIIth Century, but *public-spirit* and *public-spirited* are somewhat later.

If we turn to literature, we find, as we might expect, that the age of Skakespeare brought with it a large accession to our literary vocabulary, *lyric*, *epic*, *dramatic*, *blank verse*, *fiction*, and *critic*. We note, too, in the XVIth Century, the beginning of our modern political vocabulary; *political* itself belongs to this period, and *politics*, and *politician* (in the older and more dignified meaning of statesman) and *Secretary of State* and the adjective *parliamentary*. This political vocabulary was largely increased with the growth of political institutions in the XVIIth Century. The words *politician* and *minister* began to acquire their present meaning in its earlier years, and *legislator* was borrowed from Latin in the same period. *Cabinet Council* was apparently introduced at the accession of Charles I in 1625, and we hear of *the Cabinet* about twenty years later. *Privy Councillor* and *cabal* belong to the period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth; and the phrase *the Army* came gradu-

ally into use with the formation of a standing army at this time, and was first applied to the Parliamentary forces in 1647. We can trace, too, to this period, the first beginnings of the vocabulary of modern democracy. *Populace* was, indeed, borrowed in the XVIth Century by means of France from the Italian *popolaccio*, but like other Italian words ending in *accio*, it was a term of abuse; "the populace" was used in England as an equivalent for "mob" or "rabble"; and the adjective *popular* had something of the same depreciatory meaning. *The people*, however, in its modern sense appears during the Civil War, when Parliament made a solemn declaration that "the people are, under God, the original of all just power." It was at this time, too, that the late Latin word *radical*, used first in medieval physiology for the inherent or "radical" humours of plants and animals, and in the XVIth Century applied to mathematics and philology, came to acquire something of its modern meaning of "fundamental" or "thorough." It was, however, at this time a theological term, being used in the Puritan phrase *radical regeneration*. It was

not definitely applied to politics till about 1785, and soon became, in the reaction after the French Revolution, a term of low reproach, more or less equivalent to "blackguard"—a meaning it is said still to preserve in some remote or exalted regions.

Scriptural is a Puritan word of the XVIIth Century; and so also are *independent* and *independence*, which soon acquired a political meaning; while *demagogue* is a Royalist term which first appeared in the *Eikon Basilike*. As this defence of Charles I was supposed at the time to have been written by the King himself, the great word-coiner Milton, in his answer to it, abused it as a "goblin word," and declared, somewhat illiberally, that the King could not "coin English as he could money." *Plunder* is a German word meaning originally "bedclothes" or "household stuff"; it was much used during the Thirty Years' War, and became familiar on the outbreak of the Civil War, being especially connected with Prince Rupert's raids—the "plunderous Rupertism" of Carlyle's eccentric coining. *Tory* was originally a term of *reproach* for the half-savage bog-trotters in

Ireland supposed to be in the King's service; *Royalist* and *Roundhead* date, of course, from this period; *Cavalier* was adopted by the Puritans as a term of abuse for the swashbucklers on the King's side, to whom also applied the Protestant word *malignant*. *Prelatry*, *prelatize*, *goosery*, *fustianist*, were terms coined in the controversies of this time by Milton, who was as highly gifted for vituperation as he was for poetry. *Sectarian* was first used by the Presbyterians for the Independents, but was soon applied by the Anglicans to the Nonconformists. *Cant*, as we use it now, and *fanatic* are abusive terms introduced by the Royalists; and although they were defeated in the field, we must on the whole give them the crown of victory in this linguistic contest, as their terms of vituperation have been more widely accepted, and have gained a much larger circulation than those of their Puritan opponents.

At the Restoration, when Charles II returned to England, he brought the spirit of mockery with him; and in the reaction against the austerity and zeal of the pious Puritans, a large number of mocking words

arose or became current. To this period belong the verbs to *burlesque*, to *banter*, to *droll*, to *ridicule;* nouns like *travesty*, *badinage*, and adjectives like *jocose* and *teasing* in their modern use; while *prig* was borrowed from rogue's cant to describe a Puritan or a non-conformist minister. As typical of this time we may quote Anthony à Wood's description in 1678 of a new set in academic circles, the "banterers of Oxford," "who make it their Employment to talk at a Venture, lye, and prate what Nonsense they please; if they see a Man talk seriously, they Talk floridly Nonsense, and care not what he says; this is like throwing a Cushion at a Man's Head, that pretends to be grave and wise."

Of the more serious side of the Restoration period, the immense revolution in thought caused by the foundation at that time of modern science, and the growth of a scientific vocabulary and of a scientific view of the world, we shall speak in another chapter; there remain, however, a few words in which are embedded events or aspects of XVIIth Century history. *Bivouac*, like "plunder," is a word that arose in the Thirty Years' War,

although it did not come into English until the beginning of the XVIIIth Century; *campaign*, *recruit*, *commander-in-chief*, and the military sense of *capitulation* appear in the Civil War; and many other military terms, *parade*, *pontoon*, *patrol*, *bombard*, *cannonade*, *barracks*, *brigadier*, *fusilier*, etc., were borrowed in the later part of the XVIIth Century from the French, who were now the masters in the military art, as indeed in most of the arts at this period. *Refugee* came into the language with the Huguenot refugees; *excise* is apparently a Dutch word and, although borrowed earlier, came into general use when this system of taxation was borrowed from Holland in 1643; it long remained unpopular, and Dr. Johnson defined it in his Dictionary as a "hateful tax," "levied by wretches." *Drub*, used originally of the bastinado, is supposed to be an Arabic word, brought, in the XVIIth Century, from the Barbary States, where so many Christians suffered captivity, and where they learnt the expression from the cudgelling of their Mohammedan captors. We can trace, moreover, to the XVIIth Century the beginnings of our

modern commerical vocabulary. *Capital*, *investment*, *dividend* belong to the earlier, *insurance*, *commercial*, and *discount* to the later part of the century, and the great words *bank*, *machine*, and *manufacture* begin to acquire their modern meaning.

This commercial vocabulary was largely increased in the XVIIIth Century; *bankruptcy*, *banking*, *currency*, *remittance*, appear before 1750; in this period the old word *business* acquires its present meaning, and we hear of *bulls* and *bears*, and of trade being *dull* or *brisk*. After 1750 *consols*, *finance*, appear, and *bonus* and *capitalist*. The vocabulary, too, of modern politics grows with the development of political institutions; we hear of the *Ministry* in the reign of Queen Anne, of the *Premier* in that of George I, while in the early years of George II's reign the *administration*, the *budget*, the *estimates* appear, with *party*, as the word is now used. *Prime Minister* was borrowed from the courts of despotic sovereigns and applied to Walpole as an abusive term, but this title was expressly disowned by him, as it was by Lord North under George III. It fell more or less out

of use, being replaced by *Premier* or *First Minister*, until about the middle of the XIXth Century, and it only received official recognition in 1905.

At the end of the XVIIIth Century and the beginning of the XIXth, some of the vocabulary of the French Revolution was imported into England; *aristocracy* came now to be contrasted, not with *monarchy*, but *democracy;* the words *aristocrat* and *democrat* were borrowed from French, and the old word *despot* acquired its present hostile meaning, and *despotism* was enlarged from the rule of a despot to any arbitrary use of unlimited power. The verb to *revolutionize* and the slightly later *terrorize*, with *royalism* and *terrorism*, are words of the French Revolution; *conscription* gained its present meaning from the conscriptions of the French Republic, and *section* in its geographical use, and the XIXth Century word *sectional*, are derived from the division of France into electoral sections under the Directory.

Even the most superficial survey, however, of the XVIIIth Century must not be dismissed without a reference at least to its

contributions to our vocabulary of literature and social life. *Literature* itself only acquired the sense of literary production in this century, and *literary* (which is not included in Johnson's Dictionary) has till this time only the meaning of "alphabetical." Of new-formed words, or old words that acquired their present meanings between 1700 and 1800, may be mentioned *editor*, *novelist*, *magazine*, *publisher*, *copyright*, the verb to *review*, and the great word the *Press*. Of social life, in this Golden Age of good society, we find, as we might expect, many new characteristic terms, the words *season*, *polite*, and *club* take on new meanings, we hear of *callers* and *visiting cards;* and the immense number of compounds formed from the word "tea" (*tea-room*, *tea-party*, *tea-drinker*, etc.) would afford much material for the student of social customs. In the new compounds, moreover, which were now formed from the old word *sea* (*sea-beach*, *sea-bathing*, the adjective *seaside*, and the use of *sea-air* as a cause not of sickness but of health) he would find evidence of that discovery of the sea as a source of pleasure and well-being which we also owe to this

period. The earlier sea-terms in English, *seaman*, *seafaring*, *seacoast*, etc. (many of which date from the Anglo-Saxon period), are all of a practical and unromantic character. The Renaissance compounds, *sea-green*, *sea-god*, *sea-nymph*, are translations from the classics, and show the influence of the classical feeling for the sea. Although Shakespeare's epithets for the sea, *rude*, *dangerous*, *rough*, etc., are generally hostile, he yet shows in such adjectives as *silver* and *multitudinous*, and in phrases like *beached margent* and *yellow sands*, a sense of its beauty beyond that of most of his contemporaries. The popular love, however, for the sea and its shores dates from the XVIIIth Century, and finds its latest expression in XIXth Century compounds like *sea-smell* and *sea-murmuring*, which we owe to Tennyson.

The XIXth Century has provided us with an amazing wealth of characteristic terms; and a chronological list of these, and of the ones which have made their appearance since 1900, would, if we had space to give it, show us a curious picture of our own age, and all its interests and developments. But there is

another aspect of the subject which is even more important—the development, as mirrored in our language, of modern ways of thought and feeling—and to this we must devote our last chapter.

CHAPTER IX

LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

If we were given what purported to be a transcript of a medieval manuscript, and should find in it words like *enlightenment* or *scepticism*, we should not hesitate to pronounce it a glaring and absurd forgery; and we should reject with equal promptness a pretended Elizabethan play in which we came upon such phrases as an *exciting event*, an *interesting personality*, or found the characters speaking of their *feelings*. Or when we read in the famous cryptogram, supposed to have been inserted by Bacon in Shakespeare's and his own writings, of *secret interviews*, *tragedies of great interest*, and *disagreeable insinuations*,

we begin to doubt Bacon's authorship of these phrases; a doubt which is considerably strengthened when we find him speaking of his *affaires de cœur* and the *lone garden of his heart.* These are extreme instances; but there are thousands of other words and phrases which we feel belong to definite periods, and would never have been used at an earlier date. The reason for our feeling is only to a slight extent philological; as far as their form is concerned, the greater part of these words would have been perfectly possible—it is in their meanings, the thoughts they express, that they are such obvious anachronisms.

This curious sense of the dates of words, or rather of the ideas that they express, comes to us from our knowledge, grown half-instinctive, of the ways of thought dominant in different epochs, the "mental atmosphere" as we call it, which made certain thoughts current and possible, and others impossible at this time or that. This study of the social consciousness of past ages is perhaps the most important part of history; changes of government, crusades, religious reforms,

revolutions—all these are half-meaningless events to us unless we understand the ideas, the passions, the ways of looking at the world, of which they are the outcome. It is also the most elusive thing in history; we gain enough of it, indeed, from literature to make us aware of any glaring anachronism; but we are too apt to read back modern conceptions into old words, and it is one of the most difficult of mental feats to place ourselves in the minds of our ancestors, and to see life and the world as they saw it. It is here that language can give the most important aid to history; if we know what words were current and popular at a given period, what new terms were made or borrowed, and the new meanings that were attached to old ones, we become aware, in a curiously intimate way, of interests of that period. We cannot, it is true, always trace by means of language the ultimate source of all new ideas; they may have been inherited from Greece or Rome, they may have been discovered by some pioneer long before they became current; but the date at which they are absorbed into the common consciousness is shown fairly accurately by the

new words to which they give birth, or the change in meaning which they produce in old ones. One of the best tests of the importance and popularity of words is the number of compounds and derivatives which in a given period are formed from them. We find, for instance, that many compounds from the word *church* (*church-bell*, *church-door*, *church-book*, etc.) were formed in the Anglo-Saxon period, that many derivatives were formed from *court* and *crown* (*courtier*, *courteous*, *courtesy*, *crowning*, *crownment*), in the XIIIth Century, and that religious words like *bless* and *damn* also produce many new terms in the early Middle Ages. On the other hand, an old word like *rational*, which dates from the XIVth Century, forms no derivatives until the XVIIth, when we find *rationalist*, *rationality*, and several others; while *rationalism*, *rationalize*, *rationalistic*, belong to the XIXth Century.

Taking, then, this test of language, and relying in particular on those words that take root and multiply at various periods, let us start with the Middle Ages and see what light we can get on the growth, through the

intervening centuries, of our modern view of ourselves and the universe.

It is a commonplace to say that the dominant conception of modern times is that of science, of immutable law and order in the material universe. This great and fruitful conception so permeates our thought, and so deeply influences even those who most oppose it, that it is difficult to realize the mental consciousness of a time when it hardly existed. But if we study the vocabulary of science, the words by which its fundamental thoughts are expressed, we shall find that the greater part of them are not to be found in the English language a few centuries ago; or if they did exist, that they were used of religious institutions or human affairs; and that their transference to natural phenomena has been very gradual and late. *Order* is, indeed, a very old word in English, and appears in the XIIIth Century in reference to monastic orders, and the heavenly hierarchy, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, etc., of Christian theology. It acquires some notion of fixed arrangement in the XIVth Century, but it is not till the XVIth Century that its derivatives

orderliness and *orderly* are found. *Ordered* meant "in holy orders" till this period, when we also find the noun *disorder*. *Regular* is a XIVth Century word, but was also used of monastic orders (being the opposite of *secular*) until 1584; while *regularity*, *regulation*, and the verb to *regulate* belong to the following century. *Method* and *system* are also modern words, with the adjectives *methodical*, *systematic*, and *uniform*. The verb to *arrange* is an old word, and was used like *array* in a military sense; but it does not appear in Shakespeare or the Bible, and did not acquire its present meaning until the XVIIIth Century, at which time *arrangement* is also found. The verb to *classify*, with *classification*, belongs to the XVIIIth Century, *organism* to the XVIIth, at which time the slightly earlier *organize* and *organization* acquired their present meanings.

If we take the great word *law*, we do not find it applied in English to natural phenomena before the Restoration, although its Latin equivalent *lex* was employed in this sense by Bacon earlier in the XVIIth Century. The Roman and medieval phrase *natural*

law (*lex naturae* or *naturalis*) meant the law of God implanted in the human reason for the guidance of human conduct; and even the *laws of nature*, by those who first used the phrase in our modern sense were, as the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, regarded as commands which were imposed by the Deity upon matter, and which, as we still say, were "obeyed" by phenomena.

Many other instances could be given, but the above will suffice to show how the notion of law and order in nature and visible phenomena spread in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries, replacing the older notions of magic or divine interference. Partly produced by this sense of law and order in nature, and probably still more the cause of it, we notice also, at this time, a great increase in the vocabulary of observation. Speaking generally, the names of the abstract reasoning processes—*reason*, *cogitation*, *intuition*, etc., belong to the Middle Ages, while those which describe the investigation of natural phenomena belong to the modern epoch, or only acquire, at that time, their present meaning and their popular use. To *observe* meant to

obey a rule, or to inspect auguries for the purpose of divination, until the XVIth Century, when it acquired the meaning of examination of phenomena; *observant* and *observation* were old religious words meaning the obedience to religious laws, until the same time; *perception* meant the collection of rents until the XVIIth Century, and *scrutiny* was only used of votes until that period. *Experiment* and *experimental* are old words used in alchemy, but experiment as a process (as in the phrase *to try by experiment*) is modern, and *experimental* had hardly more than the vague meaning of "observed" until the XVIth Century. The verbs to *analyse*, to *distinguish*, to *investigate*, appear in the same period, and in the next hundred years to *remark*, to *inspect*, to *scrutinize;* to *notice* is an old verb meaning "to notify," but it fell out of use, and was only revived and given its present meaning in America at about the middle of the XVIIIth Century. We may also note that while words expressing belief—*certainty*, *assurance*, *credence*, etc., are generally old in the language, those that suggest doubt, questioning, and criticism, almost all

belong to the modern period. *Doubt* is, of course, an old theological word, and *doubtful* appears in the XIVth Century; but *doubtfulness*, *dubious*, *dubiousness*, *dubitable*, with *sceptic*, *sceptical*, *scepticism*, are of modern formation; and in this period, too, the old verbs to *dissent* and *disagree* became applied to matters of opinion or conviction.

This conception of order in the material universe, and the spirit of investigation and inquiry, resulted of course in a great increase of knowledge about natural phenomena. This increase of knowledge, and its popular diffusion, shows itself very clearly in the large number of words that now come into use to describe the qualities of matter. We note in the XVIth Century a new use of words like *tenacity* and *texture*, while in the following century we find *cohesion*, *tension*, *elasticity*, and *temperature*. At this time, too, the word *force* acquired its physical meaning; and *energy*, a word of Aristotle's creation, which was first employed in English as a term of literary criticism, was applied to the material world, although its precise modern use was not defined before the XIXth Century.

But it would be outside our scope to trace in detail the formation of the vocabulary of modern science; we can only note that the experimental study of nature began, in modern Europe, in the XVIth Century, and that many observations were made, and much material collected; and that then, after the check caused by the Civil War, when men's minds were turned at the Restoration from theological controversies to the affairs of this world, an immense and unprecedented advance was suddenly made in scientific knowledge. All the somewhat disconnected observations collected by previous generations were now ordered and systematized, and modern science sprang into existence and began to extend its domain over the whole universe.

But this conception of science was not so much a new discovery as the revival of ancient thought which found, at the Renaissance, an atmosphere favorable to its fruitful development. The order, however, which the ancients found in the universe was a fixed and unchangeable one; the belief in progressive change, in evolution, is modern, and forms,

perhaps, the most essential difference between our view of the world and that of the Greeks and Romans. We do not, perhaps, always realize how very modern the conception is, but if we take the words by which it is expressed—*advance*, *amelioration*, *development*, *improvement*, *progress*, *evolution*, we shall find that none of them can be found in English with their present meaning before the XVIth Century. *Advance* and *advancement* are old words in English, with the meaning of promotion from a lower to a higher office; and only acquire the sense of progress after the Middle Ages. *Improve* and *improvement* were terms of Law French, originally employed to describe the process of enclosing waste land and bringing it into cultivation; they acquire the sense of "making better" in the XVIIth Century, and one of the earliest uses of "improve," with this modern meaning, is found, appropriately enough, in the title of "the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge," founded about 1660.

Evolution is, of course, a modern word in English; it appeared first in a military sense

in the XVIIth Century, and acquired its present meaning and its immense development from the work of Darwin and Herbert Spencer in the XIXth Century. Indeed, it is not too much to say that although the Middle Ages had words like *regeneration* and *amendment*, with reference to the notion of personal conduct and its reform, there were at that time no general terms to express the ideas of continuous improvement, of advance to better and better conditions. The reason that there were no such terms is, of course, that they were not needed. The idea of progress may have visited the thoughts of a few lonely philosophers, but it obtained no general acceptance, and found no expression in the language. The social consciousness was not favorable to it, being dominated as it was by the religious belief in the degeneracy of a world fallen from grace, and fated to worse deterioration before its sudden end, which might come at any time. Even at the Reformation the ideal, as the word *Reformation* shows, was that of a return to the purity of primitive and uncorrupted times; and the conception of continuous evolution, of an

advance beyond the limits set by the past, is one which has appeared at a late period in the history of thought. Indeed, the application of this thought to human society, the belief in human progress, hardly became diffused and popular before the middle of the XVIIIth Century. *Progress* is an old word for a journey, a "royal progress"; it began to acquire the meaning of continuous improvement in the time of Shakespeare, at which time the verb to *progress* appeared, and the adjective *progressive*, which was used by Bacon in his *Essays*. The verb, however, became obsolete in English, and was introduced again from America after the notion of progress, taken into their systems and popularized by the XVIIIth Century philosophers had found its way into the popular imagination, and had given birth to the great new hope of modern times, the modern belief that human society is advancing, or can advance, to better and better conditions.

We have given a summary account, in the previous chapter, of the deposits left by various historical events in the English language—of words as historical documents.

Still more interesting is the evidence of language about the growth of the sense of history itself, the change that the modern conceptions of order and progress have produced in our way of regarding past ages. If we examine our historical vocabulary, the words and phrases by which we express our sense that the past was not the same, but something different from the present, we shall find that they are all of them modern, and most of them, indeed, of very recent introduction. Men in the Middle Ages were fully conscious of antiquity; but, save for the sense of increasing deterioration, no clear distinction existed in the popular mind between the life of the present and the past; feudal institutions and medieval ways of thought were attributed to the Greeks and Romans, who were always pictured as dressed in medieval costumes. Probably the first word in which our modern historical sense finds expression is the word *primitive*, as applied by the Reformers to the early Church. Indeed, the effect of the Reformation, in turning men's thoughts, not only to past events, but to the customs and institutions of earlier ages, did

much to create a sense of history. This was increased by the revival of learning, and a truer understanding of classical times; the distinction between *ancient* and *modern* appears in Bacon's writings; and the word *classical*, with something, though by no means all, of the meaning we give it, is found not much later. The Puritans, by adopting from the Church Fathers the distinction between the Old and the New Testament *dispensations*, increased the sense of historical perspective, and the words *epoch*, *century*, *decade*, with the adjectives *antiquated*, *primeval*, *Gothic*, *old-fashioned*, *out-of-date*, show its growth and spread in the XVIIth Century. It is not, however, till the XVIIIth Century that the sense of the past embodies itself in phrases like the *Middle Ages*, the *Dark Ages*, the *Revival of Learning*, while *medieval*, *feudalism*, *Elizabethan*, the *Renaissance*, belong to the XIXth Century. *Anachronism* was used in the XVIIth Century for an error in computing time; its modern meaning, first found in Coleridge, is very significant, and conveying as it does the idea of a thing which is appropriate to one age, but out of harmony

with another, it expresses a thought, a way of feeling, which is very modern, and which would not have needed expression at an earlier period. The latest addition to our historical vocabulary is the word *prehistoric*, which is first found in 1851, and which represents the opening up of an immense new field of investigation, the history of mankind before the existence of written records.

With this growing sense of the past, and its difference from the present, we find, as we might expect, the growth of a romantic and sentimental attitude towards bygone ages of English history. The earlier attitude of the XVIIIth Century toward the Middle Ages, which is expressed in phrases like the *Dark Ages*, and *barbarous* or *Gothic*, to describe everything medieval, was not long after succeeded by the Romantic movement, and its revival, which we have already mentioned, of old and half-forgotten words. But these words of the Romantic revival—*chivalry*, *chivalrous*, *minstrel*, *bard*, etc., have now taken on a romantic glamour they by no means originally possessed. *Minstrel* was a name for a buffoon or juggler, as well as a musician

in early times; while *bard*, as a name for a Gaelic singer, was used, with "beggar" and "vagabond," as a term of contempt, until it became associated with the classical use of the same word, and was idealized by Sir Walter Scott. Our modern use of *chivalry* as an ideal of conduct dates no further back than Burke's famous phrase, "The age of chivalry is gone."

The above instances of modern ways of thought and feeling will give us some slight notion of the words we must delete from our vocabulary, the ideas we must dismiss from our mind, should we wish to enter into the spirit and popular consciousness of the Middle Ages. Should we succeed in our attempt, we should find ourselves in a world strangely different from the world which modern thought has created for us—a world not governed by impersonal law, but expressing supernatural purpose, and subject to constant supernatural intervention. The sense of past and future, the looking before and after of modern times, the historical sense, which makes the past so different from the present, and fills our minds with speculations and

ideals for the future, would drop from us. The present would be for us the same as the past, and our future prospect would be that of a more or less swift destruction of the world and human society. Our modern universe is a vast process of ordered change and regular development; theirs was a definite and almost unchanging creation, formed in a moment out of nothing, and destined to end as suddenly as it began. But perhaps what would impress us most would be the absorption of thought in immediate practical considerations, the absence of curiosity about natural objects, save in so far as they ministered to man's service. We should find that the movements of heavenly bodies were mainly of interest for their supposed effect on the destinies of human beings; the plants that were useful, or supposed to be useful in medicine and magic, were the ones that were known and named; zoology was important for the moral lessons to be drawn from the ways of animals, mineralogy consisted largely in a knowledge of the magical powers of jewels, chemistry was pursued for the purpose of transmuting metals into gold; and even the philosophy of

the Middle Ages was an effort not so much to arrive at truth as to reconcile reason and revealed religion. We should find plenty of speculation about the practical uses of things, and many words to describe their nature from this point of view; but words to describe their qualities, apart from their uses, would be almost entirely wanting. Even the vocabulary of another side of disinterested observation, the sense of beauty, would be scanty, for words like *admiration* and *beautiful* belong to the XVIth Century and not to the Middle Ages.

It is this practical or utilitarian spirit which would probably most oppress us; and our minds would feel imprisoned in the small box of the medieval universe, with its confining spheres, its near, monitory stars, and didactic animals. And yet, should we thoroughly enter into the atmosphere of that time, and find mankind and ourselves, not the temporary and accidental inhabitants of a remote planet, but standing at the centre of a universe whose unifying principle was not mechanical law, but justice and divine grace, and whose end and purpose were the fulfilment

of human destiny, we might feel that our life had gained a dignity and gravity which modern science has taken from it; and that in the spiritual, and not in the natural world, was to be found, after all, the true home of the human soul.

There is another change in our vocabulary pointing to a change in thought and feeling quite as profound as that produced by science, and the sense of law and order in the material universe. The great pioneers of the Renaissance discovered not only the world of natural phenomena, but another world, equally vast and varied and new—the world of man. Man had indeed been placed by medieval thought at the centre of the universe, and nature made subservient to his needs, but it was not man as he is in himself that was regarded, but man in his relation to society or the Church. The natural man, with his individual variation from the inherited type, was hardly considered; he was subordinated to the great and dominant scheme of theology, and he was thought of not so much as a person as of a soul to be saved or lost.

Probably to each of us the sense of his own

personality, the knowledge that he exists and thinks and feels, is the ultimate and fundamental fact of life. But this sense of personality, of the existence of men as separate individuals, is one of the latest developments of human thought. Man in early societies is not thought of as an individual, and there are savage languages that possess no word for "I" or for the conception of "myself." An examination of those words by which we express this notion of personality, and their history, will show that this simple fundamental conception, like most other simple conceptions, was a late fruit of daring thought, and was only reached by devious ways, and after much abstract speculation. The word *individual* (literally "inseparable") was a word formed in scholastic Latin from the earlier *individuum*, which meant an indivisible particle or atom. *Individual* was used in medieval logic for a member of a class or species, and also as a theological term with reference to the Trinity, and did not acquire its present meaning in English before the time of Shakespeare. The great classical and medieval word *person* has an even more curi-

ous history. It is, in its origin, one of those many words (*scene*, *scenery*, *landscape*, *attitude*, *contrast*, *character*, *expression*, *costume*, etc.) which have come to us from the arts, and show how conceptions and distinctions, first achieved by art, are found, like those thought out by philosophy, to be of useful application to life and natural phenomena. For *person* was originally a dramatic term, the Latin *persona* (derived, it is believed, from the verb *personare*, "to sound through") meaning an actor's mask. From this it acquired the meaning of actor's part, or of one who performs or acts any part, and especially a "personage," one who plays an important part on the stage of life. Its next meaning was legal, a man's personal rights and duties which depend upon his position in life, and it did not acquire the meaning of an individual human being till late in Roman times. This was probably helped by the use of the word in Christian theology for a Person of the Trinity; and we may say in general that the notion of personality, though of Stoic origin, was greatly developed by Christian thought, with its sense of the infinite worth of

the individual human soul. This conception, then, had already been achieved by medieval thought, and the words *person*, *personal*, *personality*, belong to this period. They have, however, received in modern times an immense extension of meaning, and another whole group of words has been created or adopted to express the various new conceptions to which the idea of personality has given birth.

The *ego*, with *egoism*, are terms introduced by French philosophers in the XVIIth Century, and *egotism* is another French term. These were borrowed at various periods; *egotism*, which is used by Addison, being the first to appear in English, while *egotistical* belongs to the XIXth Century. But before this the old word *self*, like a germ that finds a soil and atmosphere favourable to its multiplication, began to form compounds in enormous quantities. *Self-liking*, *self-love*, *self-conceit*, *self-assurance*, *self-regard*, *self-destruction*, *self-murder*, belong to the later part of the XVIth Century, and these are followed in the next hundred years by *self-contempt*, *self-applause*, *self-confidence*, *self-esteem*, *self-*

defence, *self-command*, and many others. The multiplication of these words has gone on steadily ever since; *self-help* and *self-assertion* are characteristic of the XIXth Century, and *self-culture* has come to us from the strenuous climate of New England. *Selfish* and *selfishness* are Puritan words, formed by the Presbyterians about 1640, to express a notion for which the older *self-love* was too vague, and *philauty* from the Greek, and *suicism* from the Latin too pedantic for popular acceptance, though both of them were tried.

The self, or ego, is not, however, a simple object, but possesses many aspects and attributes. The more abstract qualities of human reason found their names as, we have seen, in scholastic philosophy, but *fancy* and *instinct* belong to the time of Shakespeare, and *impulse* to the XVIIth Century. The distinction between *talent* and *genius* is a modern one, and the evidence of language throws considerable light upon its origin. The word *genius* appears first in English, early in the XVIth Century, in the classical sense of a tutelary god or attendant spirit; it then acquired the meaning of the "spirit" or

distinctive character of an age or institution, and then of the natural ability or capacity of a man. Its modern use for extraordinary and mysterious creative power was slowly developed in England in the XVIIIth Century, and was, perhaps, helped by the use of *genius* to translate the Arabian *Jinn*, the supernatural beings of the *Arabian Nights*. Our modern use was not, however, recognized in Johnson's Dictionary, and was only received in its full definition in the Romantic period of *Sturm und Drang* in Germany, where the distinction between genius and talent was strongly emphasized, and whence it was brought back, by students of German literature, to England in the XIXth Century. The Germans, on the other hand, imported, in the XVIIIth Century, our word *original*, which in the phrase *original composition* had recently acquired in England a new meaning, and had given birth to the modern word *originality*. Our use of the old words *temperament* and *personality*, in phrases such as *artistic temperament*, or *a strong personality*, are still more modern, and the *subconscious* or *subliminal* self are very recent additions to our vocabulary.

But before this conception of personality found its full development, the human mind had awakened to a vivid sense of the multitudes of individuals, with their various characters and passions, who go, as we say, to make up the world. The human vocabulary of the Middle Ages is somewhat poor and meagre, and it is only now and then in the works of a great writer like Chaucer, that we get glimpses of the rich and varied secular life of this period. We have names for religious or military characters, terms descriptive of noble or base condition, pride or humility, courage or cowardice; and, in addition to the oldest feelings of human nature, *hate*, *fear*, *love*, and *joy*, we find a large vocabulary of the emotions sanctioned by religion, *remorse*, *repentance*, *anguish*, *delight*, *despair*, *compunction*. But when men freed themselves from the bonds of theology, at the same time that they broke through the confining spheres of the Aristotelian heavens, they saw the whole universe of varied human nature spread before them. The human intelligence, like Adam naming the animals in the Garden of Paradise, found terms for

the secular characters, with their passions and peculiarities, which passed before it in motley procession. This process of observation and naming has continued ever since; and a list of these words, arranged accor ing to the dates of their appearance, would help us to enter into the feelings of the different generations, and to understand their likes and dislikes, and what they thought worthy of praise or condemnation. Such a study would, however, expand this book to undue proportions, and we will confine ourselves to a short account of the terms of abuse or depreciation, as these are the ones in which the spirit of an age mirrors itself most vividly, and in these, too, the genius of the language is most completely manifested. Medieval terms of abuse—*villain*, *churl*, *boor*, *knave*—are very largely derived from the names of people in a humble condition, and form a striking opposition to *kind*, *free*, *gentle*, *gentleman*, etc., which signify noble birth. There is, however, one word, *dangerous*, which, like the adjective *proud*, we may contrast with these. For *dangerous* is derived ultimately from the Latin *dominus*, "lord" or "master," and

its earliest meaning in English was that of "haughty," "arrogant," "difficult." In Chaucer's time it was used to express another aspect of lordly character, coming to mean "fastidious," "delicate," "dainty," and it is not found with the meaning of "perilous" or "risky" before the XVth Century.

Among later terms, we have already mentioned those of Protestant controversy, and to these may be added the characteristic adjectives, *credulous* and *superstitious*, words that, if they had existed, would have had no abusive sense before the Reformation. Of words describing secular characteristics, *cold-hearted*, *affected*, *indiscreet*, *bold-faced*, and *moody*, as we use them now, are first found in Shakespeare, and *revengeful*, *cynical*, *absurd*, also belong to this period. In the XVIIth Century words, *fanciful*, *fatuous*, *callous*, *disingenuous*, *countrified*, we find a somewhat nicer if more superficial observation; and, omitting the Restoration terms of abuse (which have already been mentioned), we notice in the XVIIIth Century adjectives, *prim*, *demure*, *prudish*, *gawky*, *bearish*, and *impolite*, all of which refer to qualitites objec-

tionable in the intercourse of society, which was so highly developed in this period. There are two other words that are very characteristic of the XVIIIth Century, *enthusiastic* and *intolerant*. *Enthusiastic* and the noun *enthusiasm* were first used at the English Renaissance, with the historical and pagan meaning of possession by a god or divine frenzy; but they came in the XVIIIth Century to be abusive terms for religious fanatics and religious fanaticism, and *enthusiastic* only recovered a good meaning at the more romantic end of the century. If *enthusiasm* was repellent to this "enlightened" age, *intolerance*, which is apt to accompany it, was equally repellent; and we find that *intolerant* and *intolerance* both make their appearance now—indeed, there would have been no need for them before the Restoration, nor would they have been abusive words at an earlier period. These XVIIIth Century words form a curious contrast to the earlier terms of abuse—*miscreant*, *renegade*, *libertine*—in which wrong or liberal views on religious subjects were taken to imply moral delinquency.

But the study of human nature can be

pursued from two points of view; we may observe our fellow-men and their ways and characters; or we may turn within and study our own selves. "Know thyself" was an exhortation inherited from antiquity, but its complete realization has only been accomplished in modern times. Speaking generally, we may say that the men of the Renaissance devoted their minds to observing their fellow human beings; and that men did not turn to the study of themselves, the second great chapter in the book of life, until more than a century had passed. This great revolution in thought—this discovery of the inner life and feelings—was due to many influences. Protestantism, by making the experience of each individual the foundation of religion, was one of its causes; and it was no doubt helped by the writings of a man like Montaigne, who was the first in modern times to devote himself to the study of his own moods and thoughts. This change in point of view gained also impetus from the great revolution in philosophy when, in the XVIIth Century, Descartes turned the world inside out, and defined the activity of con-

sciousness, the certainty of the thinking self, as the most immediate fact of existence.

But all these and many other influences were partly the cause, partly the symptoms, of this shifting of thought to a new centre. Our object is to consider it for a moment, not in its ultimate sources, but in its growth and diffusion in English life, as shown by the English language. This can be well seen in the history of the word *conscious* and its derivatives. *Conscious* was borrowed from the Latin poets in the time of Shakespeare, with the sense of sharing knowledge with another, and was used of inanimate things, as Milton's *conscious night*. The word is first found in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, who ridicules it as a modern and affected term. It was used by Locke of thoughts and feelings, and finds its full extension and definition early in the XVIIIth Century, when we read of "conscious beings." *Consciousness*, first found in 1632, attained its philosophical definition late in the XVIIth Century, when it was described by Locke as "perception of what passes in a man's own mind." To Locke also we owe the use of the compound

self-consciousness (then recently formed) in its modern sense; and at about this time the old word *subjective* shifted its meaning from the scholastic sense of "existing in itself" and took on the meaning of "existing in consciousness or thought." *Self-knowledge*, *self-examination*, *self-pity*, and *self-contempt* belong to the "self" words of the XVIIth Century, and with them appear a swarm of what we may call "introspective" words—words that describe moods and feelings, as seen from within, as part of our own inner experience. The older kind of names for human passions and feelings we may call "objective," that is to say, they are observed from outside, and named by their effects and moral consequences. These names are apt to be moral labels, stuck on dangerous tendencies, to warn us of their ultimate results. Most people must have felt at one time or another the grotesque incongruity of ugly names like *greed* or *malice* for feelings delightful at the moment; and a non-human observer from another planet might be puzzled to find that the passions and propensities that were called by the least at-

tractive terms were the ones that mankind most persistently indulged.

The more modern and "sympathetic" names for human feelings, derived from introspection and self-analysis, only begin to appear in large numbers about the middle of the XVIIth Century. *Loneliness*, indeed, and *disgust* and *lassitude* are a little earlier; but at this time words like *aversion*, *day-dream*, *dissatisfaction*, *discomposure*, make their appearance; *depression* is transferred from material objects to a state of mind, and the old word *reverie*, which had first meant "joy" and then "anger," acquires its modern and introspective meaning. This vocabulary of moods and feelings was increased in the XVIIIth Century by *ennui*, *chagrin*, *homesickness*, *diffidence*, *apathy*, while the older words, *excitement*, *agitation*, *constraint*, *embarrassment*, *disappointment*, come to be applied to inner experiences. With these words we find a curious class of verbs and adjectives which describe not so much the objective qualities and activities of things as the effects they produce on us, our own feelings and sensations. To *divert*, to *enliven*, to

entertain, to *amuse*, to *entrance*, to *fascinate*, to *disgust*, to *dissatisfy*, with the adjectives *entertaining*, *exhilarating*, *perplexing*, *refreshing*, and many others, are all modern words, or old words given a new and modern meaning. Some of them, indeed, are very recent, and our use of the common adjectives *amusing* and *exciting* is not found before the XIXth Century.

Perhaps the most characteristic of all these modern adjectives is the word *interesting*, which is put to so many uses that we can hardly imagine how life or conversation could be carried on without it. And yet *interesting* is not found before the XVIIIth Century, when it first meant "important," and its first use with its present meaning appears, characteristically enough, in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, published in 1768. About the same time the verb to *bore* appeared; and we who are so often *bored*, or *interested*, must, if we wish to enter into the state of mind of past ages, try to imagine a time when people thought more of objects than of their own emotions, and when, if they were bored or interested, would not name their feeling, but

mention the quality or object that produced it. This change is a subtle and yet an important one; it is due to our increased self-consciousness, and our greater sense of the importance of the inner world of feeling. One of the latest products or by-products of this change is the modern habit of taking a conscious pleasure in our own emotions. This "sentimental" attitude is well dated for us by the appearance of the word *sentimental* itself about the middle of the XVIIIth Century. It soon became fashionable; and, carried abroad by Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, it was borrowed by the French, and translated by the Germans; thus showing, as many other instances would show (had we the space to give them), that these changes of language, thought, and feeling were not confined to England, but belonged to a general movement in which the whole of civilized Europe took part—one nation borrowing from the other as new developments arose. The contributions of England to European civilization, as tested by the English words in Continental languages, *bifteck*, *pudding*, *grog*, *jockey*, *tourist*, comfort, sport, etc., are not,

generally, of a kind to cause much national self-congratulation. We may be justly proud, however, of our political terms *parliament*, *bill*, *budget*, *meeting*, *speech*, and we can at any rate claim the "sentimentality" of modern Europe as a product of this age of XVIIIth Century "sensibility" in England, when the words *affecting* and *pathetic* acquired their present meanings, and when our ancestors began to speak of their *feelings* and *emotions*.

Our account of these developments of modern thought, the growing sense of individuality and self-consciousness, has been necessarily somewhat hurried. In any study of this kind we must be on our guard against hasty generalizations; and we should test, moreover, the changes in one country with those in the languages of other countries which share with us in the general civilization of Europe. We must also guard against the notion that men, at any period, did not possess certain thoughts and feelings because they had no words to express them. The investigation of the character of different ages by the study of the words used in them is apt,

unless it be pursued with caution, to lead to strange and often absurd conclusions. It has ever been seriously argued, from the vagueness and insufficiency of his colour-words, that Homer, as well as all his contemporaries, was colour-blind. But, as it has been well pointed out, "the fact that the Homeric Greeks have no expression for 'green' does not prove that they did not see the colour, but that they did not want the word"; and so, if the Elizabethans had no word for *disappointment* and *home-sickness*, we cannot assume that they did not experience these feelings, but only that they were not interested in expressing them.

But this difference, this change of value and interest, is a very real and very important one. Vague feelings and thoughts that lurk, dim and unexpressed, in the background of the mind become very different and much more important when our attention is directed to them and they appear sharply defined in consciousness. The change of thought from one generation to another does not depend so much on new discoveries as the gradual shifting, into the centre of vision, of ideas and feelings that had been but dimly realized

before. And it is just this shifting from the background to the centre of thought, that is so important and yet so elusive, which is marked and dated in the history of language. When anything becomes important to us it finds its name; and in the history of these names in the English language can be traced many changes in English life, many developments of thought, which would yield a rich reward to patient and careful study.

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